Reyes assures jittery Japanese execs on kidnappings

Story on PAGE A2

A year of booboos and royal scandals

ANG DAMING PALPAK!

PARIS—Blunders, errors, faux pas and good old-fashioned scandals were hardly in short supply in 2003.

In political, royal, diplomatic and even sporting circles, the year threw up enough

A YEAR/ A21

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER Sunday
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Maria Ressa, reporting live on Playtime** LIFESTYLE /G1
- **PBA grappling with P349-M collectibles** SPORTS /A25
- **Another Cabinet member resigns** NEWS /A6

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Bro. Eddie: From activist to preacher to president?

By Blanche S. Rivera

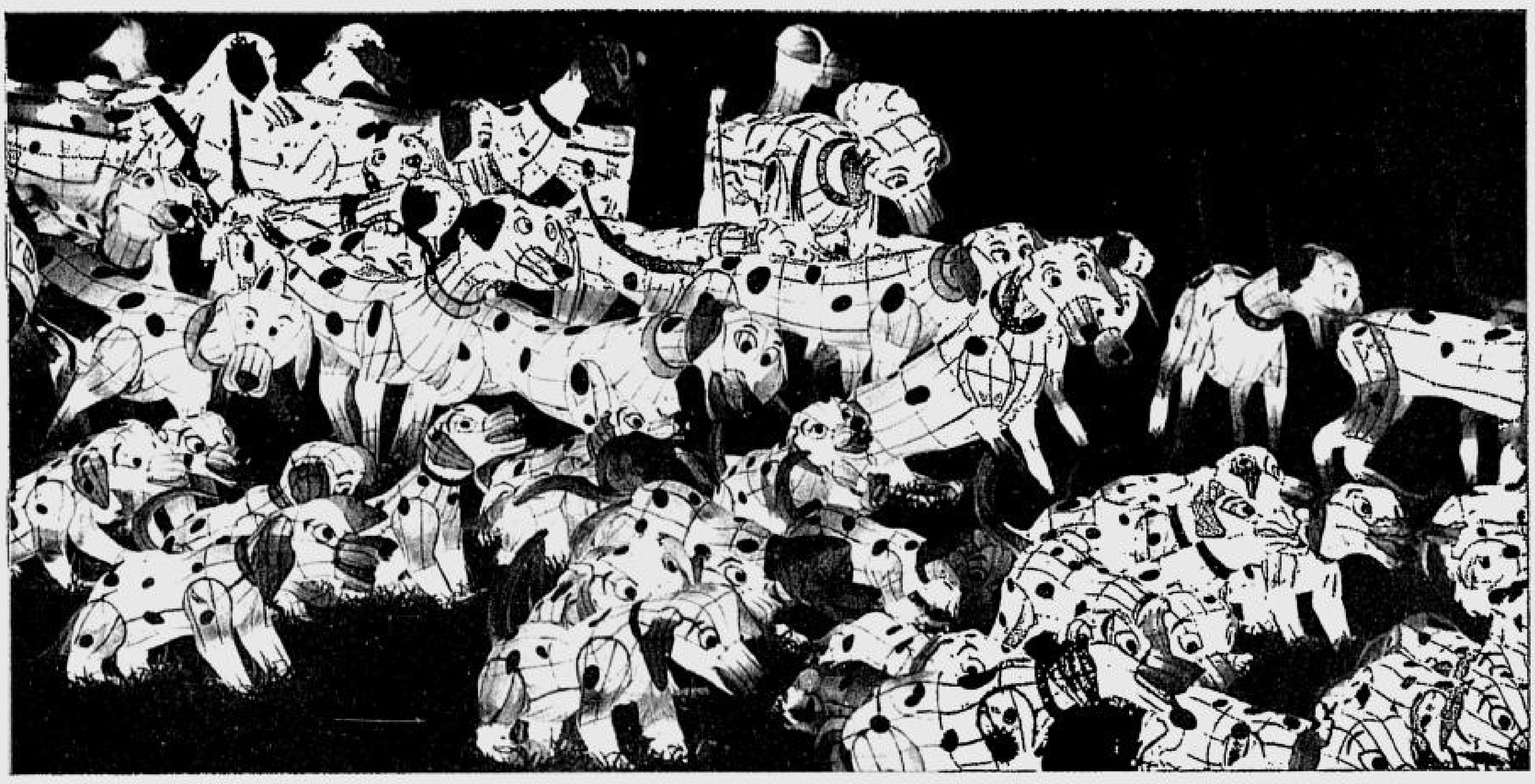
EDUARDO Villanueva, 57, a near nonentity in the world of politics, has been primed for the presidential contest for the past 30 years.

Villanueva—popularly known as Bro. Eddie, the founder and spiritual director of the Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide— has been an activist all his life, having first organized the masses for a nationalist democratic revolution only to turn around and gather them instead for Jesus.

He traces his roots to Bulacan where he was raised by comfortably well-off entrepreneurial parents, and where he himself has raised his four children with his wife Dory.

Eldest son Eddie Jr. is the mayor of Bocaue while another other son, Joel, sits in

BRO. EDDIE/ A8

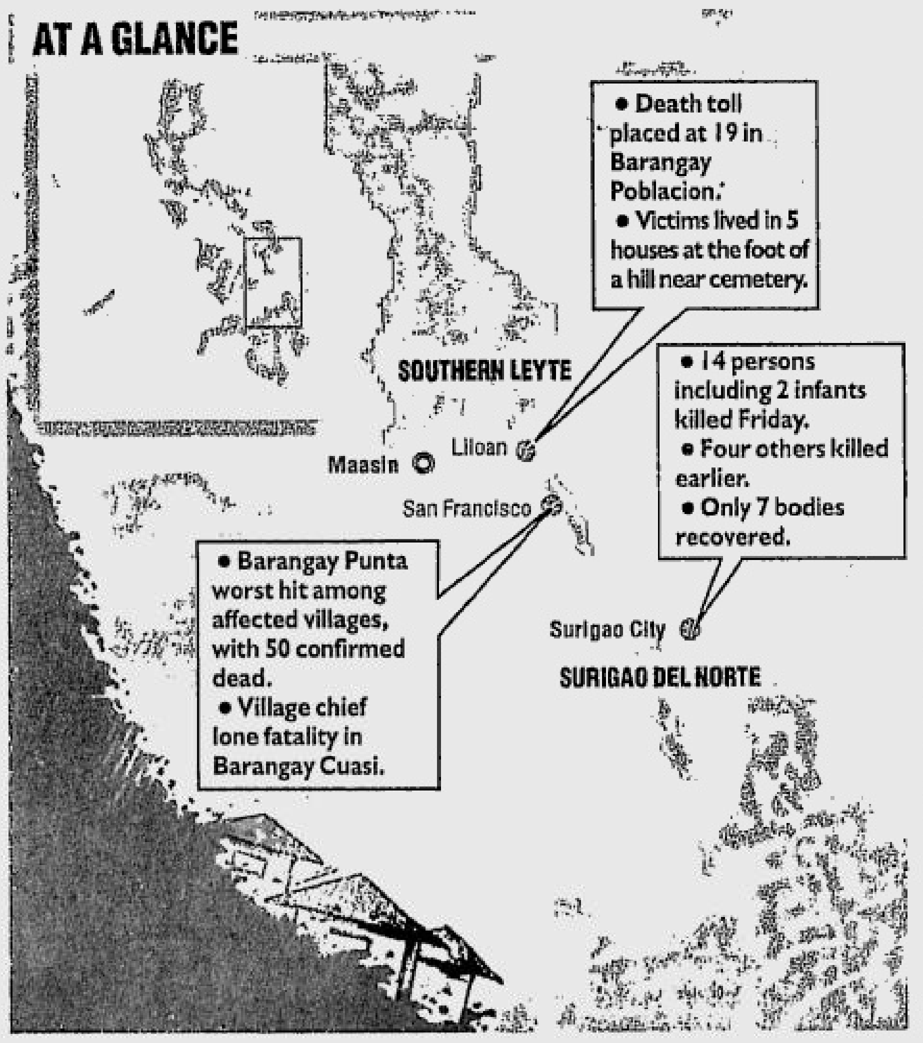


FOUR DAYS TO CHRISTMAS
Look who's up in lights. 101 dalmatians in front of Glorietta, a sight for dog-tired shoppers caught in the holiday crush.

RUDY ESPERAS

Slides kill 70 in S. Leyte

AT A GLANCE



- Death toll placed at 19 in Barangay Poblacion.
- Victims lived in 5 houses at the foot of a hill near cemetery.

- 14 persons including 2 infants killed Friday.
- Four others killed earlier.
- Only 7 bodies recovered.

- Barangay Punta worst hit among affected villages, with 50 confirmed dead.
- Village chief lone fatality in Barangay Cuasi.

14 dead in landslide disaster in Surigao City

By Jani Arnaiz and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

LILOAN, Southern Leyte—A pre-Christmas disaster hit three villages in two neighboring coastal towns Friday night, with huge mounds of mud, earth and debris descending on local residents in a swirl of water.

As of last count, about 70 persons including children were reported dead, authorities said. Only about 50 have been manually unearthed alive.

The number of those killed is still expected to rise because as many as 83 residents are believed to have been trapped in piles of mud in Barangay Poblacion in Liloan and Barangays Punta and Cuasi in San Francisco.

The landslide occurred at around 10 p.m. when most of the residents were asleep, according to Michael Napallacan of Barangay Poblacion. At least 300 residents did not know what hit them until it was too late.

The earth and mud were believed loosened by six days of continuous rain brought on by an inter-tropical convergence zone and a low-pressure area spotted in Mindanao.

A similar disaster struck a mountainside village in Surigao City on Friday morning, killing at least 14 persons, including two babies. This figure brought to 18 the total number of fatalities in the days of incessant rain in the Caraga region.

Surigao Mayor Alfonso Cassura said yesterday that only the bodies of the babies and five others had been dug out of the mud that covered Sitio Kinabutan in Barangay Rizal.

In Southern Leyte, Gov. Rosette Lerias said six bodies had been taken to the municipal hall of Liloan. She said it was difficult to travel by land because piles of earth were blocking the roads leading to the two affected towns.

The INQUIRER was able to get through to Liloan past 5 p.m. yesterday.

Liloan and San Francisco—both located on Panaon Island which is connected to mainland Leyte by the Liloan Bridge—are 30 kilometers apart. Liloan

SLIDES/ A21

Survivors saved by trees they didn't cut

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Her family would have been buried alive, but for the trees.

Speaking yesterday on radio from her home in Barangay Poblacion, Liloan, Southern Leyte, Baby Almoguerra said she was thankful for the gmelina and mahogany trees that protected her home from the avalanche of earth, mud and debris that wrought havoc on the lives of four of her neighbors.

"*Kalooy sa Diyos, napugngan nga moabot sa ubos ang landslide tungod sa mga kahoy. Wa pa ang mga kahoy, maapil ming dia sa ubos* (By the grace of God, the trees blocked the landslide. If not for these trees, we would have been hit)," Almoguerra said over station dyLA based in this city.

At least 15 to 20 houses were spared from the landslide, but their occupants were evacuated to the Liloan municipal hall and gymnasium.

The landslide covered five houses,

SURVIVORS/ A21

Libya agrees to give up WMDs after secret talks

WASHINGTON—Libya, long a pariah on the world stage, has acknowledged attempts to develop weapons of mass destruction and pledged to renounce them, the United States and Britain said.

In nearly joint surprise announcements late Friday, the American and British leaders said Libyan leader Col. Moammar Gadhafi has agreed, after nine months of secret diplomacy with Washington and London, to renounce all weapons of mass destruction and "immediately and unconditionally" welcome international inspectors.

The announcement could pave the way for the lifting of US sanctions against Libya, imposed in the wake of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing of a Pan Am airliner, which was carried out by Libyan agents and turned the north African state into a virtual pariah in the West.

Washington and Tripoli have not had diplomatic relations since 1981, and Libya remains under US sanctions over the December 1988 Lockerbie bombing, which left 270 people dead.

The United Nations lifted its sanctions

LIBYA/ A8

Miss Saigon producer patron of Pampanga artists

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

STA. RITA, Pampanga—Sir Cameron Mackintosh, the man who gave the big break to Lea Salonga and several Filipino artists to shine on the West End and on Broadway, is also a patron of a performing arts troupe based in this rustic town once devastated by the Mt. Pinatubo eruption.

The producer of acclaimed international musicals such as "Cats," "Les Miserables," "Phantom of the Opera," "Miss Saigon" and "Oliver!" gave a "generous grant" to the ArtiSta. Rita through the Cameron Mackintosh Foundation.

Andy Alviz, founder and chair of the ArtiSta. Rita Foundation Inc., linked the fledgling troupe to Mackintosh.

Alviz, 40, was a resident choreographer in the Asia run of Miss Saigon.

"The Knight believed in local talents," Alviz said, as he gushed over the talented Mackintosh who at age 6 already wanted to be a musical producer.

In 1995, Mackintosh's company received the Queen's Award for Export Achievement. Mackintosh was knighted in 1996 for his services to British theater.

ArtiSta. Rita is composed of 50 talented Kapampangans aged 10 to 60.

Although its members come from various professions and are busy with their work or studies, they all consider themselves professional performing artists.

"They live their art," Alviz said.

The nine children in the group excel in their art, just like their adult counterparts.

Aaron and Ariane Sembrano, Katkat and MacMac Pineda, Dingdong Manalo, Kebin David, Jon Cuenco, Jean and Chloe Fernandez have been exposed to the discipline and professional conduct of humble artists.

Alviz said this kind of training at an early age could help produce more world-class Filipino artists.

There are three priests in the group: Fathers Francisco Lansang, Ireneo Gangcuangco and Bon Guanlao. They do translation work and play the violin.

Through Mackintosh's grant and the support of local donors, the ArtiSta. Rita was able to produce its

MISS/ A8

Arti
Arti Sta. Rita

MARVYNE GEFTE

THANKS to a believer in the Filipino as a world-class talent, artists in rustic Sta. Rita, Pampanga, are set to launch the first album of Kapampangan songs.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern and Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over Eastern and Central Visayas and Eastern Mindanao. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/12/21/03

Second FRONTPAGE

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Widespread rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Widespread rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Widespread rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

Reyes assures Japanese auto execs of security

By Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

STA. ROSA, Laguna—Anti-kidnapping czar Gen. Angelo Reyes yesterday assured Japanese auto executives and businessmen in the Calabarzon region of the government's efforts to protect investors against abduction.

Reyes and local police officials met with top Japanese executives of Toyota Motor Phils. and other businessmen in Laguna province, to discuss the government's anti-kidnapping program.

He told the businessmen that the government's anti-kidnap network was in place in Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog and the National Capital Region. *(See related story on Page A17.)*

As this developed President Macapagal-Arroyo accepted the help of private anti-crime crusaders in going after 20 more active kidnap-for-ransom gangs in Metro Manila.

In a statement, Ms Macapagal said: "We welcome any information and assistance from the Citizens Action Against Crime (CAAC) in the identification and interdiction of all kidnap gangs."

CAAC chair Teresita Ang-See earlier urged authorities to go after 10 active kidnap-for-ransom groups with no warrants issued against them on top of the 10 that had been identified previously.

"The National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Naktf) and other law enforcement agencies can deal with this problem and what we need is the full cooperation from various sectors," the President said.

Reyes, a former defense secretary, joined key officials of the Calabarzon police command in inspecting chokepoints and checkpoints set up in vital areas of the region.

Naktf has neutralized four of the 10 most notorious leaders of kidnap-for-ransom gangs in the country since the government set up mobile checkpoints.

The President has ordered the expansion of the mobile checkpoints and chokepoints to Regions 3 and 4 starting today.

Senior Supt. Benjamin Belarmino, who accompanied Reyes to the meeting, told the INQUIRER that the Naktf chief wanted to see if the local police were abiding by the strict rules governing manning the checkpoints.

"We are having consultations with businessmen in response to the President's call to stop kidnapping. In Southern Tagalog, we want to check the system in Laguna and Cavite where most of industrial zones are located," Belarmino quoted Reyes as saying.

Reyes said they would also check police preparedness in Rizal, Batangas and Quezon which are major transportation routes going to the southern part of the country.

Belarmino, the regional intelligence operations chief, said Reyes reminded the police of the importance of forging alliances with the private sector and local communities in maintaining peace and order.

During the visit, Reyes also congratulated the regional police for successfully intercepting a group of three suspected kidnappers in a chokepoint in Biñan town on Thursday morning.

The enhanced cooperation with the car manufacturers is actually a pilot project of Naktf in the provinces, Belarmino said.

08. Robert Pacquin
10. Jerry Ranes
11. Melvin Batayola
12. Reynaldo 'Jimmy' Carino
13. Jesulito Mergunio
14. Cesar 'Boy' Evangelista
14. Pepito Mepania
RANDED WORKERS ON HUNGER STRIKE - December 2003
Philippine Embassy, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

CHILDREN and other relatives of the 16 overseas Filipino workers press the government to help their loved ones who are on a hunger strike in Saudi Arabia. JOAN BONDOC

3 stranded OFWs home soon—DOLE

By Martin P. Marfil

AT LEAST three of the 16 stranded workers in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, have had their payment claims resolved and are just waiting for their exit visas to be processed, Labor Undersecretary Manuel Imson said yesterday.

This was, however, only one aspect of the case of the 16 workers who have initiated a hunger strike at the Philippine Embassy in Riyadh and have refused requests for them to leave the ministry premises.

"They want immediate repatriation. They refuse to understand that there is a requirement for an exit visa which their employers should sponsor," Imson said.

According to the Department of Labor and Employment, some of the workers have money claims against their employers, while in other cases were employers have claims against them.

Imson said that of the 16 protesting workers, at least five are facing claims from their employers and these cases were pending before the Saudi courts.

"Their demands for settlement are being attended to," the labor official said.

The department could not provide details on who among the 16 workers have had their cases settled, who had employers with claims against them and who had pending claims against their employers.

The 16 workers quit their jobs in Saudi Arabia claiming unpaid wages and maltreatment.

[The protesting workers, who have organized themselves into a group called Kapatiran ng mga Migranteng Stranded sa Riyadh, are camped out at the embassy and have refused to move to shelters which have been found for them by Filipino community leaders.

"There is resistance from the workers ... [they] refuse to cooperate," Imson said.

Despite this, Imson said the embassy has filed a diplomatic note with the Saudi government to facilitate exit visas for the workers.

"In the event that a stalemate arises [from the pending claims], we still have a chance to get exit visas," Imson said.

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Military admits MNLF role in Robot capture

By TJ Burgonio

AN INTEGREE from the ex-secessionist Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) helped government troops capture Abu Sayyaf leader Galib Andang, alias Commander Robot, the military confirmed yesterday.

Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, armed forces chief information officer, said the MNLF member-turned-soldier provided information on the general whereabouts of the 35-year-old kidnap bandit, leading to the shootout and arrest in Barangay Panabuan, Indanan, Sulu on Dec. 7.

"He's (from) the area so he knows the ins and outs," Lucero described the informant in a phone interview. "All battalions in Mindanao have integrees in their ranks because they're good assets and soldiers," he added.

No help at all

But an intelligence official who asked not to be named denied knowledge of any MNLF participation in the operation: "They did not help," he said, "not that I know of."

In Cotabato City, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) spokesperson Eid Kabalu charged that Robot's arrest had been prearranged in exchange for freedom for jailed MNLF leader Nur Misuari.

"Although it's an internal issue concerning our brothers in the MNLF, this is a serious matter that we want the press to investigate," Kabalu said.

Release Misuari

On Dec. 6, Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong announced that he had approved the reinvestigation of the rebellion charges against Misuari. Two days later, he downplayed fears that this move could lead to the immediate release of Misuari—also former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao—who has been held in a Sta. Rosa, Laguna jail for two years.

Maguindanao Assemblyman Ibrahim Ibay said he and some colleagues in the Regional Legislative Assembly (RLA) had received similar information on the alleged deal a week ago. He did not divulge the source.

Deputy Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Virgilio Leyretana shrugged off the allegation. "(Kabalu and Ibay) should not issue such statements if they don't have evidence because it confuses the public," Leyretana said.

Europeans grateful

Diplomats from France, Germany and Finland are expected to call on Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Narciso Abaya this week to relay their governments' gratitude to the Philippine military for Andang's capture.

The bandit led in the abduction of 21 tourists, mostly Europeans, from the Sipadan diving resort in Malaysia in April 2000. The hostages were released after their governments paid millions of dollars in ransom.

"We'll see if they have another purpose (besides thanking me) ... if they want to interrogate Andang," Abaya said in an ambush interview. "I think we should encourage them. We have to work together globally to finish terrorism."

Extradite Andang

A court in Goettingen, Germany earlier asked the Philippines to extradite Andang to that country for trial in connection with the 2000 kidnapping, since it involved German nationals.

The much-awaited interrogation of the bandit leader could start once his condition stabilizes, according to Col. Rafael Regino, military surgeon-general.

Regino said Andang still has a fever "from time to time" because of infection in his right leg, which was operated on after his left leg was amputated.

Doctors at the V. Luna Medical Center in Quezon City, where Andang underwent the surgical procedure, have barred his counsel, Oliver Lozano, from visiting him, "to prevent further infection."

The patient is still in the hospital's intensive care unit, and visitors invariably bring infection to the "practically sterile" area," Regino said.

Lozano last visited Andang two days ago. *With Rosa-May V. de Guzman and Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Amnesty not for me, says Erap

By Armand Nocum and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

DEPOSED President Joseph Estrada yesterday expressed support for President Macapagal-Arroyo's proposed general amnesty program, but said it should not include him since he is not guilty of the plunder charges filed against him.

"You give amnesty only to those who are guilty of crimes they are accused of. I am not guilty. I'll never accept any kind of amnesty. That's a ploy because they cannot prove my guilt," Estrada told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Estrada suspects the amnesty offer is a scheme by Malacañang to short-cut the legal process and his trial before the Sandiganbayan in the absence of evidence to pin him.

Estrada, accused of plunder for allegedly taking up to P4.1 billion in kickbacks from jueteng, government deals and tobacco excise taxes, among other things, has strongly maintained his innocence, saying his only crime was his being a womanizer and a poor judge of his friends' characters.

While dismissing the amnesty program as a political ploy to ensure the President's poll victory, Estrada said he supports the idea of uniting all warring sectors of society.

"I support the idea of amnesty, especially in the case of the Marcoses. Once and for all, we should decide whether to give them amnesty to put a closure to the issue of the Marcoses," he said.

Apart from the Marcoses, Estrada said, the amnesty should also apply to Muslim secessionists and other armed groups.

In Malacañang, the President told critics of her amnesty bill not to "overreact" and to keep an "open mind" on the issue.

"This (amnesty bill) is still in the incipient stage and let us not overreact to it," the President said in a statement. "Let us open our minds and hearts and explore the issues that can unite us rather than belabor the past," she added.

In Congress, the President's allies yesterday urged critics to give her amnesty proposal a chance.

Lakas Reps. Willie Villarama of Bulacan and Aurelio Umali of Nueva Ecija said that the amnesty envisioned by the President will not depreciate justice or waive existing laws.

"The general amnesty offered by the President is a communion of goodwill for all and malice towards none," said Villarama, stressing that it would also signal a regime of forgiveness, understanding and unity.

The Communist Party of the Philippines, however, yesterday slammed the proposed amnesty program, calling it another "cheap and desperate political gimmick."

CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said the proposed amnesty "will completely deny justice to the Filipino people who were victimized by the grave crimes of repression and plunder by the Marcos and Estrada regimes."

Rosal accused Ms Macapagal of desperately trying to woo the Estradas and Marcoses through the amnesty offer into supporting her candidacy. *With reports from Cynthia D. Balana, Norman Bordadora and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Impatient Barbers threatens to bolt Lakas for Roco camp

By Michael Lim Ubac

ADMINISTRATION Sen. Robert Barbers yesterday expressed impatience at President Macapagal-Arroyo over the time it was taking her to decide on a vice presidential running mate. Because of this, he said, he might just decide to bolt the ruling Lakas-CMD party and move over to the camp of Ms Macapagal's rival, Raul Roco.

"*Kung ayaw niya, ayaw ko na rin* (If she doesn't want me, then I don't want her either," said Barbers, who has not been shy about his vice presidential aspirations.

Barbers said a group of governors and congressmen backing Roco had talked to him and offered to put him up as Roco's running mate.

"Well, I'm seriously considering that offer," he said.

Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano said the other day that Roco's campaign team has been making "overtures" to Barbers.

Barbers said that some of his Lakas partymates, disgusted at Malacanang's continued courting of popular Sen. Noli de Castro, have been prodding him to take the offer.

"So if the President would not pick me as a running mate in spite of the unanimous endorsement of the party last October, I wouldn't insist. It's so self-serving," he said.

But Barbers clarified that as a "loyal partyman" he would remain noncommittal at this point, "to preserve the unity of the party."

Albano had said that the long wait for the President's decision could "create dissension within Lakas and trigger an exodus to other parties."

He said the Roco camp would get Barbers if he fails to be chosen by Ms Macapagal.

Lakas Representatives Miguel Zubiri and Prospero Pichay earlier said the President would be sending the wrong signal if she were to choose De Castro over partymate Barbers.

There would be a negative reaction from partymates because Barbers had been unanimously endorsed by the party, they said.

House Speaker Jose de Venecia and Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzales have also expressed support for a GMA-Barbers teamup, saying it would bring a "geographical balance" to the ticket since Barbers hails from Mindanao, while the President is from Luzon.

MAKATI MED OPENS CLINIC IN ALI MALL

makati medical center
CLINIC
MMC

The facade of the satellite clinic at the third level of Araneta Shopping Center, Ali Mall.

A satellite clinic of the country's premier hospital right at the heart of Cubao commercial complex.

Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, Judy Araneta Roxas, of the Araneta Center, Dr. Raul G. Fores, president and medical director of Makati Medical Center, Baby Araneta Fores, wife of Dr. Fores, and Dr. Vicente Arguelles, chairman of MMC's Department of Surgery, on December 8—feast of the Immaculate Conception—led the cutting of the ceremonial ribbon to inaugurate the MMC clinic at the 3rd level of Ali Mall.

"This facility will serve the healthcare needs of Quezon City residents, including those from Metro Manila's central district," says Dr. Fores. "And it's only fitting that we inaugurate and bless the clinic during the feast of the Virgin Mary, the hospital's patron saint."

The clinic will provide multispecialty services to outpatients and is equipped with a laboratory, ultrasound, radiology apparatus, mammogram and dental equipment in the facility.

The establishment of the clinic—MMC's first—hews with the concept of multi-tasking, wherein consumers can do everything in one day and in the same place.

Doctors and other medical personnel that will man the clinic were picked from the hospital's own medical staff. These include experts in internal medicine, cardiology, pulmonology, endocrinology, dermatology, obstetrics and gynecology, neurology, general surgery, orthopedic, neuro-surgery, dentistry, physical-rehab science, pediatrics, ophthalmology and ENT.

Clinic hours are from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays to Saturdays.

The clinic's medical staff is made up of Drs. Teresa Torres, Clavel Macalintal and Sotero Crisostomo, internal medicine-cardiology; Drs. Patrick Magalit, internal medicine-pulmonary, Lorenzo Hocson, general surgery, and Jeanne Bertol, orthopedic surgery; Drs. Raul Palma, neuro-surgery, Darwin Dasig, neurologist, Guia Avecilla and Patricia Astorga, dermatologist; Drs. Natividad Soler, ob-gyne, Antonio Santiago and Eduardo Sarabia, ophthalmology; Drs. Jose Mari Gahol, ENT, and Lumen Yanga, pediatrics.

Satellite clinics, MMC explained, are not designed to attend to emergency cases and will refer such cases to the nearest hospital.

The Araneta Center management said that with the setting up of the MMC clinic at the mall, residents of Quezon City and adjoining districts, including shoppers, could now undergo medical treatment within the commercial complex.

Over 3 decades of healthcare service

With a floor area of more than 500 square meters, MMC brings to the clinic over three decades of medical and humanitarian services and a wealth of awards and citations from renowned organizations here and overseas.

The hospital distinguished itself in the recent Asian Hospital Management Awards last October, topping two major categories in the event, which drew 103 entries from 25 hospitals in the Asean region, with Dr. Fores receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award.

MMC won the award for its projects, Continuous Quality Improvement Program for Technical Service and the Room Service Fast Discharge for Customer Service.

The hospital's 'Yan Ang Gusto Namin' project earned a commendation from HMA.

The awards honored hospitals in the Asia-Pacific Region, which have carried out outstanding projects in the healthcare sector.

Raquel Kathleen Denning, 6, of Liberty Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City was one of the first patients who sought treatment at the clinic.

A symposium on cardiology, cardiothoracic surgery, neuroscience, oncology and transplant was also held at MMC last November. Experts from Stanford's International Medical Services and Makati Med were the resource persons at the symposium attended by doctors from other hospitals, "Stanford Manila Global Medical Forum."

The two institutions have forged close ties since 1991, when they set up an international network and telemedicine system—a novel program for the country's healthcare industry.

For more than five years, Stanford and MMC have been in touch with each other, exchanging medical information, images such as X-rays—and second opinions on patients—through a sophisticated videoconferencing equipment. In these sessions, doctors can see and talk to each other, all in real time and in full motion video.

Early this year, the hospital's certification from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), a worldwide quality-certifying body, was upgraded from ISO 9002 to ISO 9001:2000.

MMC was conferred ISO 9002 and EN 46002 certifications that put the hospital in the company of top 30 medical institutions in the world. The European norm was the first to be granted to a hospital in Asia and with the ISO 9002, MMC became the only hospital in the Asia-Pacific region to have dual certification from the international body.

These set apart the hospital's clinic from other similar medical facilities, steered by years of proven service and pioneering efforts in the field of medicine. A world-class Hospital with a Heart, the institution is synonymous with professional healthcare, and committed to providing an environment that promotes high-quality and cost-effective medical services for patients, including the indigents.

Cutting the ceremonial ribbon is Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte with Judy Araneta Roxas (from left), Dr. Vicente Arguelles, chairman, MMC Department of Surgery, Baby Araneta Fores, Dr. Raul Fores, president and medical director, MMC, Dr. Guia Avecilla, OIC, satellite clinic, Dr. Edmundo Villacorta (back), chief, nuclear medicine, Dr. Roberto Macasaet, chief, urology section and Morriel Abogado, lease administrator of Ali Mall during the blessing and inauguration last December 8. The clinic has a floor area of over 500 square meters.

Advt.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, December 21, 2003
4th Sunday of Advent

1st Reading: Mic 5:1-4

The Lord says this, "You, Bethlehem Ephrathah, so small that you are hardly named among the clans of Judah, from you shall I raise the one who is to rule over Israel. For he comes forth from of old, from the ancient times.

Yahweh, therefore, will abandon Israel until such time as she who is to give birth has given birth. Then the rest of his deported brothers will return to the people of Israel.

He will stand and shepherd his flock with the strength of Yahweh, in the glorious Name of Yahweh, his God. They will live safely while he wins renown to the ends of the earth. He shall be peace."

When the Assyrian invades our land
and sets foot on our territory,
we will raise against him
not one but seven shepherds,
eight warlords.

2nd Reading: Heb 10:5-10

This is why on entering the world, Christ says: You did not desire sacrifice and offering; you were not pleased with burnt offerings and sin offerings. Then I said: "Here I am. It was written of me in the scroll. I will do your will, O God."

First he says: Sacrifice, offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire nor were you pleased with them-although they were required by the Law. Then he says: Here I am to do your will.

This is enough to nullify the first will and establish the new. Now, by this will of God, we are sanctified at once by the sacrifice of the body of Christ Jesus.

Gospel: Lk 1:39-45

Mary then set out for a town in the Hills of Judah. She entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leapt in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with holy spirit, and giving a loud cry, said, "You are most blessed among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! How is it that the mother of my Lord comes to me? The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby within me suddenly leapt for joy. Blessed are you who believed that the Lord's word would come true!"

Commentary

Two insignificant kinswomen meet and celebrate the kindness and fidelity of their God. Both carry, unknown to the world, greatness and hope for the world in their wombs. Each brings to the other a gift. Mary gifts Elizabeth with a leap of joy in her aged womb, because Mary bears the Savior. Elizabeth gives Mary assurance and confirmation to strengthen the young woman's faith in this early stage of her pilgrimage. In this quiet encounter in the hill country of Judea, we see a vision of redeemed human community to dream of and strive for. May all human beings greet and welcome each other as kin. May all recognize the greatness we bear in ourselves by God's grace, and exchange our gifts in gladness. May we thus find ourselves together rejoicing in the goodness of God.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (Republic Act No. 6425, as amended)—Buy-bust operation—In a prosecution for illegal sale of dangerous drugs, what is material is proof that the accused peddled illicit drugs, coupled with the presentation in court of the *corpus delicti*. The testimonies of the buy-bust team established that an operation was legitimately and successfully carried out to entrap appellant. The positive identification of appellant by the poseur-buyer as the one who peddled the shabu equivocally established the illicit sale as he is the best witness to the transaction. Moreover, his testimony was corroborated in every material detail by the other operatives who participated in the buy-bust operation. The court is not unaware that in drug-related cases, frame-up and "*hulidap*" are the common and standard line of defenses. In the case at bar, we find that the discrepancies cited by the appellant in support of his acquittal are immaterial and insufficient to reverse his conviction. It is settled that the exact date when the crime was committed need not be proved unless it is an essential element of the crime. Nonetheless, in this case, prosecution witnesses and anti-narcotics operatives narrated in detail the events leading to the arrest of the appellant pursuant to a legitimate buy-bust operation. The wrong date of arrest appearing in the Booking Sheet/Arrest Report was sufficiently clarified at the trial as it appears to be mere clerical error committed by the person who typed the report and operated the computer. Lastly, there can be no doubt as to the date of the incident as even the defense theory of *hulidap*, as testified to by the appellant, his uncle and girlfriend, placed the incident on November 12, 1998. Neither is the exact description of the plastic bag containing the confiscated shabu indispensable for appellant's conviction. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Puno, Third Division, People vs Chua, G. R. No. 144312, September 3, 2003] BY R.B. VERA

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Court orders arrest of former Pasar president

THE PASIG City Municipal Trial Court has ordered the arrest of Javier Herrero, former president of the Philippine Associated Smelting and Refining Corp. (Pasar), for allegedly concealing corporate documents from minority shareholders.

Pasar is the country's largest producer of raw materials for copper products, such as cathodes used as fiber optics and wiring harness. It is 90-percent owned by Glencore AG of Switzerland.

Police tried to serve the warrant on Thursday at the firm's office along Emerald Avenue at Ortigas Center, Pasig, but failed to reach either Herrero or his co-accused, corporate secretary Jocelyn Salazar. Herrero is said to have flown to Chile after the case was filed. Salazar, according to her counsel, will surrender on Monday.

The warrant was issued after three minority shareholders complained that Herrero and Salazar refused to show them documents which, they believed, could clarify reported irregularities in the handling of the company's finances.

Consuelo Padilla, one of the complainants, said the company undertook questionable transactions to benefit Glencore AG.

She declined to give details of the transactions, but said the documents they wanted included accounting records, data on capital expenditure, marketing contracts and hedging reports.

Padilla insisted that Herrero and Salazar had violated the Corporation Code, which requires companies to provide all shareholders records of a firm's transactions and financial condition.

Michelle V. Remo

Palace denies politicking

MALACAÑANG yesterday said President Macapagal-Arroyo was not politicking when she reminded soldiers of the benefits they have received under her administration, during the 68th anniversary rites of the Armed Forces of the Philippines on Friday.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the President's "Ina ng AFP" speech was meant to highlight her standing in the military chain of command and not to buttress her political stock.

In her speech at Camp Aguinaldo, Ms Macapagal told soldiers and officers that she was their mother and that they were her children.

The President reminded the military that it was she who raised the soldiers' pay and it was she who provided at least P1 billion worth of housing units for soldiers since 2001.

"To impute politics in her statements is out of line," Bunye said. "We are talking about reforms instituted in the AFP over an extended period. This is a fact and we shouldn't attach politics to it."

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

Freed soldier blames pols for Maguindanao violence

By Charlie Señase
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—One of the soldiers taken hostage and then released by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Maguindanao recently blamed the armed clashes between government troops and the MILF in that province on politics and politicians.

Pvt. Wilfredo Castillano, who was captured by MILF forces after last week's clash that left 15 combatants dead, made the statement before he and three other soldiers taken hostage with him were released by the Moro secessionist group on Friday.

Castillano in the statement said that politicians tended to create "scenarios" that could create problems for the province of Maguindanao.

Worse, he said, some military officials were in connivance with politicians to create such "scenarios" in the province.

"*Ang nagpapagulo sa Maguindanao ay isa lang—pulitika (The problems in Maguindanao are caused by only one thing—politics)*," he said.

He said politicians, whom he did not name, were behind the violent incidents in Maguindanao that were blamed on the MILF.

"*Siyempre sila lang ang pinaniniwalaan ng tao kasi sila ang namumuno sa bayan. Pero ibinibintang nila sa* MILF (Of course, the people believe them because they are the province's leaders. But they place the blame on the MILF)," Castillano said.

But Lt. Col. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said Castillano's statement was obviously made under duress.

He pointed to the circumstances under which the statement was made.

The MILF took Castillano, Pfc. Alex Yumag, Pvt. Neil Lagad and Pvt. Arnel Dibaudin hostage after a gun battle that lasted last Monday night through Tuesday morning. The soldiers belong to the 7th Infantry Battalion.

The MILF claimed up to 10 soldiers were killed in that clash, while the Army admitted to only up to six deaths. An undetermined number of MILF fighters were also killed.

On Friday, the MILF released the four soldiers, saying it did this to prove that it followed international protocols.

Ando said that following his release, his colleagues had yet to hear Castillano say the same things he did in the statement.

Tough-talking NPA is mama's boy at heart

LUCENA CITY—He's as tough as rebel leaders come, but all he wants for Christmas is a big hug from mom.

"To be with her and feel the warmth of her embrace would be the best Christmas gift for me," said Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

"But I realize that would be hard at this time. Even if I want to visit her, I simply can't risk the security of my comrades. Despite the cease-fire, the warrants for my arrest are still in effect." He made it clear that he was not asking for the suspension of the warrants.

Ka Roger said the last time he saw his mother was in 1998. When she turned 90 last Dec. 5, he said, "I just greeted her via cell phone."

The Rosals are from Ibaan, Batangas. 'Anyway,' he said, "most of our relatives and friends are free to celebrate Christmas with us inside the guerilla zones."

"Ka Roger" has spent 30 years in the revolutionary movement.

The National Democratic Front, the CPP's political arm, has declared a truce from midnight of Dec. 20 to Jan. 4. President Macapagal-Arroyo also ordered the suspension of military offensives (Somo) with the communist rebels from Dec. 10 to Jan. 6.

During the NPA ceasefire, Rosal stressed, a "defensive mode" would be "strictly" observed in all 130 guerilla fronts nationwide.

"We do not trust the military Somo," he explained. "That's only for propaganda purposes."

The NDF earlier said the cease-fire was based on "humanitarian grounds" and goodwill, to allow soldiers and NPA guerrillas to enjoy the holidays.

Rosal was optimistic they would have more "outside visitors" this year. "There are already several of them inside our controlled areas. They arrived in small groups, sneaking through the enemy's security patrols and bringing with them Christmas goodies," he said. Most of the visitors would stay until after the CPP's 35th founding anniversary celebration on Dec. 26, he added.

Rosal demanded that the government issue a back-to-barracks order to all its troops in the field for the entire duration of the cease-fire. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Another Cabinet member resigns

PRESIDENT Macapagal Arroyo is losing a fourth member of her Cabinet after Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong announced he was quitting to run in next May's elections.

Datumanong's departure will bring another new face into the Macapagal administration just five months before the elections.

While Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas left his job a week ago to run for a Senate seat, two of the most critical Cabinet posts became vacant in circumstances not related to the election.

Finance Secretary Jose Camacho, who was highly respected in financial markets for his emphasis on fiscal discipline, quit in late November, citing exhaustion with the job.

Foreign Secretary Blas Ople, a respected labor leader and former journalist, died in a Taiwan hospital last Sunday after suffering a heart attack on a plane while on a foreign trip.

Datumanong, the only Muslim member of the 20-person Cabinet, said he would register as a candidate on Dec. 29 to contest a congressional seat in Mindanao. *Reuters*

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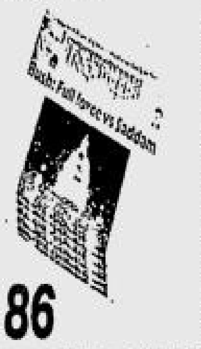
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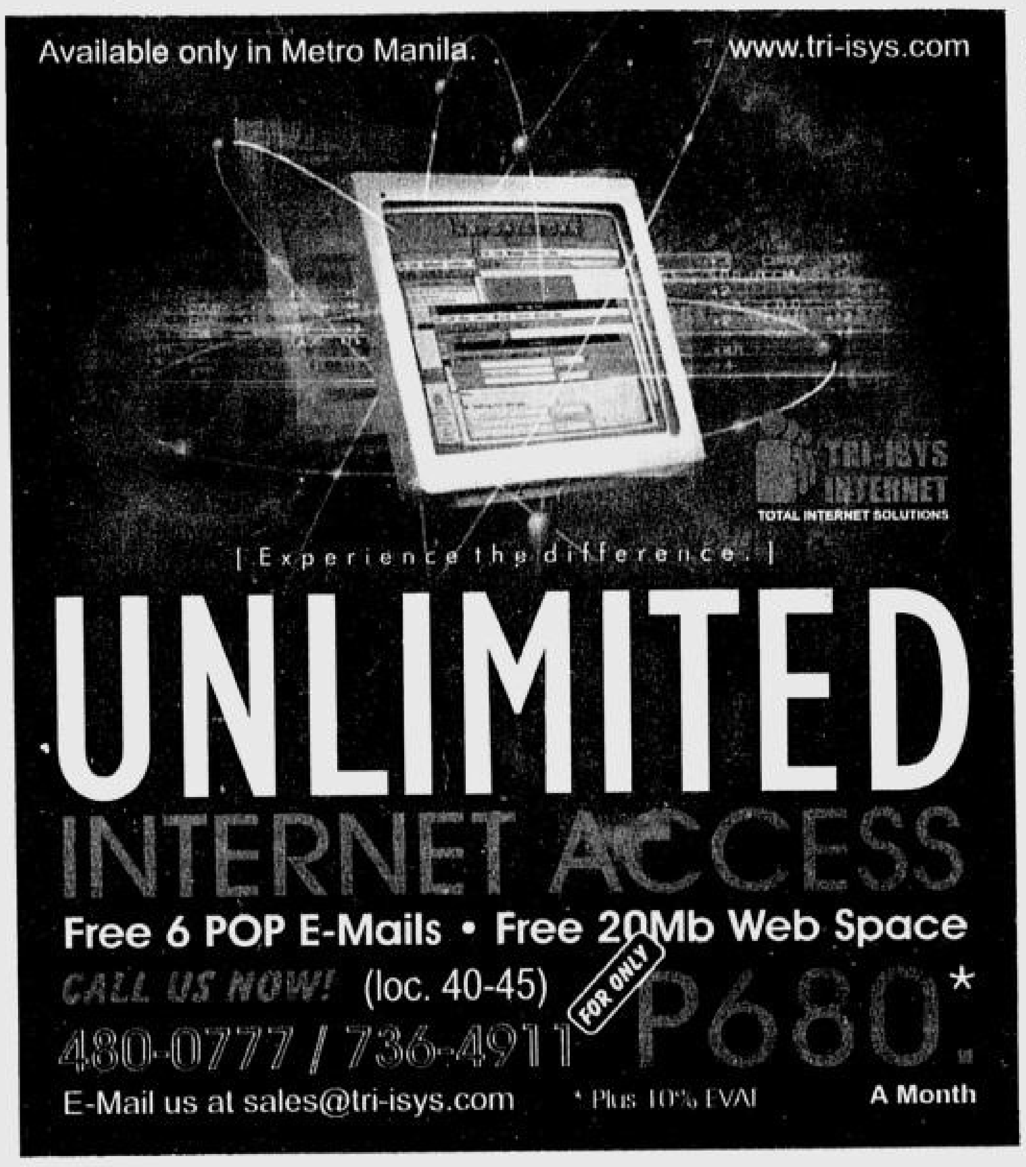

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Kalinga tops hybrid rice producers; end to imports seen

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo is coming to this city to receive a special gift this holiday season: Kalinga's vast rice fields managed to best the rest of the country's hybrid rice producers, using a product she endorsed here during her Holy Week break.

Kalinga farmers produced 7.2 tons of hybrid rice per hectare between 2002 and 2003, providing proof the government's hybrid rice program would put a stop to rice importation within a year, said Faustino Maslan, Cordillera director of the Department of Agriculture.

"We have already (dispatched) the good news to the President," Maslan said.

The DA also reported profitable gains from testing in Kalinga Apayao and Mt. Province of the genetically modified Bt (Bacillus thuringiensis) corn, although Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. had issued a moratorium on the commercialization of all GMOs, Maslan said.

Ms Macapagal introduced to the media in April at the presidential Mansion House here Prof. Yuan Long Ping, a Chinese scientist who is known as the father of hybrid rice.

The President pushed Yuan's SL8 variety, which is being commercialized in the country by the firm, SL Agritech Corp.

Maslan said the DA has cautiously introduced these new technologies because of the huge influence of environmental and militant groups on Cordillera farmers in challenging GMO commercialization.

Elizabeth Versola, DA's regional technical director for research, said Bt corn tested positively in 2,000-sq.-m pilot areas. She said the results appeared to have impressed local farmers.

Maslan said the DA has been persuading Kalinga farmers to integrate corn production into their farm cycle.

But hybrid rice remains the province's chief success. Maslan said hybrid varieties have been grown on 3,000 hectares in the province, yielding three times the traditional harvest.

Davao produced seven tons of hybrid rice this year, but it failed to breach Kalinga's record, he said.

Kalinga is the largest rice-producing province in the Cordilleras. Since July, it has produced 51,146 metric tons of palay, which are sold to Cagayan and Isabela.

The DA plans to increase hybrid rice areas in Kalinga to 9,000 hectares next year, Maslan said, because of the farmers' increased interest in the seeds.

Although the hybrid variety has reduced the cost of pesticides for the farmers, Maslan said the seeds cost four times that of the traditional rice breed.

Inbred seeds cost farmers P650 for every 40 kilos of rice produced in a hectare, but Yuan's variety cost P1,200 for 20 kilos of rice produced in a hectare, he said.

Yuan's seeds generate from 30 to 50 *cavans* per hectare.

Hybrid rice farmers have accessed SL Agritech and Monsanto Philippines, which is commercializing Bt corn.

Maslan said farmers also accessed the Mestizo hybrid variety produced by the Nueva Ecija-based Philippine Rice Research Institute.

GMA, Bulakeños honor Ople

HAGONOY, Bulacan—President Macapagal-Arroyo led government officials in paying their last respects to the late Foreign Secretary Blas Ople during necrological services at the historic Barasoain Church in the City of Malolos on Saturday.

Vice Mayor Josefina Contreras said Malolos Mayor Danilo Domingo and Paombong and Hagonoy town officials will pass resolutions renaming the Anilao Diversion Road the Ople Diversion Road. The road connects Paombong and Hagonoy to the MacArthur Highway.

Contreras said naming the roadway after Ople was their way of thanking Bulacan's favorite son for his efforts at helping connect the three towns.

Ople also supported the construction of the Sta. Elena-San Pablo Diversion Road here and several bridges, hospitals, clinics and school buildings. He was instrumental in the expansion of the Bulacan State University in Malolos.

Known as Amang to his townmates, Ople built the "Diwa house-office," a compound with a multipurpose stage at his home in Barangay Sta. Monica here for the use of those who could not afford to rent space for special occasions.

Hagonoy Mayor Felix Ople said he would complete the infrastructure projects started by his father in this town.

A 7 a.m. Mass will be held today, Sunday, at the Barasoain Church before Ople's remains are taken to the Libingan ng mga Bayani at Fort Bonifacio to be given a hero's burial. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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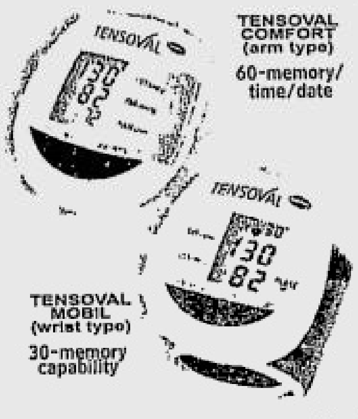

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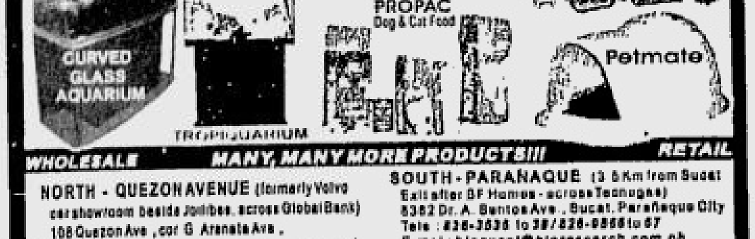

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LOIDA NICOLAS LEWIS, chair of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) invests President Macapagal as its honorary member after the first-ever, three-day Global Filipino Networking Convention. From left, former Tourism Secretary Mina Gabor, Presidential Adviser on Overseas Workers Heherson Alvarez, Alex Esclamado, the President, Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, Lewis and Doy Heredia, NaFFAA chief of staff/CEO.

Nothing wrong with Bro. Eddie running–Enrile

By Jerry Esplanada

VILLANUEVA

THERE'S NOTHING wrong with a religious leader like Bro. Eddie Villanueva becoming President as long as he does not establish a theocratic government in the style of the Taliban of Afghanistan and the ayatollahs of Iran, according to former senator Juan Ponce Enrile.

It would be perfectly all right as long as Villanueva, the spiritual head of the Jesus is Lord Movement charismatic sect, does not "mix the temporal world with the eternal world," said Enrile, who counts the evangelist as an "old friend."

Villanueva declared the other day he was "99 percent sure" of running for President next year at the head of the Bangon Pilipino movement that he launched earlier this week.

Malacañang yesterday. said President Macapagal-Arroyo and Villanueva would remain "principled friends as far as reforms and reconciliation are concerned," after the President failed to convince the popular preacher to drop his plan to run and direct his flock, estimated at 7 million members, to support her presidential bid.

"The President will respect whatever his plans are and whatever views he has on politics and governance," said presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye in a statement.

Bunye said the President "has a high regard for Brother Eddie and is grateful for his support for her programs and policies."

Commenting in his weekly program over dzEC radio yesterday, Enrile said a Villanueva presidency should not be based on the tenets of his church.

"Because once he places society under his concept of morality and his view of the Bible, that's a different story," he said in Filipino.

Enrile recalled how in Iran the Ayatollah Khomeini "imposed the fundamentalist concept of an Islamic government, with the Koran [Islam's holy book] as the basis of governance."

The Taliban also used the same approach in running Afghanistan, "that's why there's chaos there," said Enrile.

But the former senator warned that Villanueva may be entering into something that he was not really familiar with.

"If he withdraws now, people will doubt him. If he pushes through with his candidacy and he gets very few votes, it would reflect badly on his group. The real size of his following will be revealed," Enrile said in Filipino.

Enrile also defended both Villanueva and movie star Fernando Poe Jr., who are being derided as being unqualified for the high office they are aspiring to for being "non-politicians."

Enrile said he considers "both of them as experienced persons" who did not need high academic qualifications to become President.

He explained that experience does not only come from service in government but from life which any prospective President would be called on to use in making decisions.

Enrile said the country does not need another "economist" like Ms Macapagal as President. *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan*

Libya agrees to give up WMDs after secret talks

From page A1

on Libya after it agreed earlier this year to pay $2.7 billion in compensation to relatives of those killed in the attack.

US President George W. Bush praised the move as beneficial to world peace and the security of the United States and said Libya had begun "the process of rejoining the community of nations."

British Prime Minister Tony Blair called the renunciation "courageous and historic, and I applaud it."

"This evening Colonel (Moammar Gadhafi) has confirmed that Libya has in the past sought to develop WMD capabilities, as well as longer range missiles," Blair said live on television.

"As a result, Libya has now declared its intention to dismantle its weapons of mass destruction completely."

Libya also confirmed it would go about dismantling its program in a "transparent and verifiable" manner.

"I applaud it," Blair said of the development, which came following intensive trilateral talks which got under way just as London and Washington were going to war against Iraq's Saddam Hussein, himself accused of harboring weapons of mass destruction.

"It will make the region and the world more secure. It shows that problems of proliferation can, with good will, be tackled through discussion and engagement, to be followed up by the responsible international agencies."

To welcome inspection

The actual Libyan announcement was far more low-key, in the form of a brief statement distributed to journalists in Tripoli.

"Libya reaffirms its commitment to respect all conventions, including the addendum protocol to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and declares itself ready to welcome any international inspection mission," it said.

The statement acknowledged that Libya had "tried to develop its defensive capabilities when its calls to make the Middle East and Africa zones exempt from all weapons of mass destruction went unheeded."

But "following discussions between Libyan, American and British experts, Libya has decided to abandon all facilities, tools and programs sensitive to the production of such weapons," it added, without further detail.

Nato welcomed the announcement "with great satisfaction," spokesman Jamie Shea told AFP in Brussels late Friday.

"Nato attaches great importance to all efforts to rein in proliferation," of such arms, he added, while hailing the efforts of the United States and Britain in obtaining the undertaking from Tripoli.

To cancel sanctions

Bush said that with Gadhafi's announcement, "Libya has begun the process of rejoining the community of nations," an allusion to the canceling of sanctions.

"And Colonel Gadhafi knows the way forward," he said. "Libya should carry out the commitments announced today. Libya should also fully engage in the war against terror." But Bush made clear that he and Blair were not yet prepared to take the Libyan leader entirely at his word.

"Libya has a troubled history, but America and Britain will be vigilant," he said. "Libya can regain a secure and respected place among nations and over time can achieve far better relations with the United States ... Libya should also fully engage in the war against terror."

"Opposing proliferation is one of the highest priorities of the war against terror," said Bush. "The attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 brought tragedy to the United States and revealed a future threat of even greater magnitude."

A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Libya's latest agreement did not mean the sanctions would be lifted immediately.

"As Libya becomes a more peaceful nation, it can be a source of stability in Africa and the Middle East," Bush said.

"Should Libya pursue internal reform, America would be ready to help its people to build a more free and prosperous country," he added.

AFP

Miss Saigon producer patron of Pampanga arts

From page A1

first musical album which includes nine almost-forgotten Kapampangan folk songs that were passed from one generation of farmers to the next.

These are "Oyan na ing Papel" (There Goes the Paper), "Pusu" (Heart), "Inyang Malati Ku" (When I was Small), "Ating Metung a Dalaga" (There was a Young Lass), "Atsing Rosing/Kadayatmalatan" (Sister Rosing/in the Midst of Ocean Bear), "Dalumdum Ning Bengi" (In the Darkness of the Night), "Indung Balayan" (Motherland), "Mareng, Mareng" (Mary), and "Atin Ku Pung Singsing" (I Have a Ring)."

Three others in the album are traditional songs done ala Crissotan, a local zarzuela-like genre developed by the prolific Pampanga poet-dramatist Juan Crisostomo "Crissot" Soto.

These are "Bidang," "Tumaila" (Lullaby) and "Nung Ibie Mu Ya" (If You would Bestow).

Three original contemporary songs are included in the collection: "Masayang Kebaitan Keka" (Happy Birthday to You), "O Ima" (Oh Mother) and "Kapampangan Ku" (I am a Kapampangan).

The last song, which is the album's carrier piece, also features artists with Kapampangan roots: Mon David, Nanette Inventor, Jeff Arcilla and Michael de Mesa.

Abundant talent

According to Robby Tantingco, director of the Holy Angel University's Don Juan Nepomuceno Center for Kapampangan Studies, the ArtiSta. Rita CD is a "worthy follow-up" to the album "Pamalsinta quetang Milabas" (Romancing the Past) produced in 2000 by the Heirs of Crissot Literary and Cultural Foundation.

World-class rendition

"The first song...starts grandly with a full orchestra, and when. the vocals start singing the nursery ditty *'Oy-ana ing papel sula-sulapo ya,'* your first reaction is to laugh because it's such a surprise, and then you think, wow, they honor a small folk song with a world-class rendition," Tantingco said in his review of the ArtiSta. Rita album.

In the CD cover, ArtiSta. Rita said it was organized in December 2001 because "we realized that it would be a terrible waste to leave this abundant gathering of talent undiscovered and undeveloped."

Alviz, who was born in Sta. Rita, said ArtiSta. Rita was his and musical directors Recy Pineda's and Randy del Rosario's way of returning to their roots and contributing to the cultural development of the town where raw talent abounds.

Pride

"We wanted to instill a sense of pride for the artists, for the artists' audience and for all Kapampangans," Alviz said.

In March 2002, the troupe embarked on a two-act musical odyssey, "Pangaslag Ning Aldo" (At the Break of Dawn). It initially played before an audience of 3,000 during a two-night run, and then went around Pampanga, inspiring pride among local folks.

Tomorrow, ArtiSta. Rita is launching the CD in a musical at the town's antique Villa Epifania, the mansion where the movie "Tanging Yaman" was filmed.

Bro. Eddie: From activist to preacher to president?

From page A1

Congress as the party-list representative of the Citizens' Battle Against Corruption.

Today, Villanueva claims to be a reluctant candidate for President. He is seeking to revolutionize the country's politics, which he calls the "unexpected agenda" of his life.

"I have learned to be idealistic and realistic over the years because of my communist days and my ministry," says Villanueva who was interviewed at the Pasig offices of Zoe television which he chairs.

Villanueva's parents, devout Catholics who used to manufacture and supply veils to church parishes, sent him to St. Mary's Academy, a private Catholic school in Bulacan for his primary education.

When Villanueva entered the Philippine College of Commerce in Manila (now the Polytechnic University of the Philippines) for college in 1965, he abandoned the Catholic Church for communism and became obsessed with the teachings of Marx, Lenin and Mao Zedong.

His exposure to the lives of farmers and laborers fueled his newfound religion. He became chair of the Kabataang Makabayan in his province. Between classes, he organized students, workers and led the often bloody protest rallies against the Marcos dictatorship.

On AFP wanted list

Villanueva went to the University of the Philippines law school in 1970 after finishing a course in Business Economics at the PCC. He dropped out a year later when Marcos suspended the writ of habeas corpus and he was included in the military's wanted list.

He remembers exiled communist leader Jose Ma. Sison urging him to shift his advocacy from the campus to the rural areas while the military was hot on his trail.

Villanueva took Sison's advice, focusing his efforts on the textile firms in Bulacan, forming unions, launching protests against employers refusing to pay wages and hospitals turning away patients without money to make a deposit.

His political activities put a strain on his relationship with his wife, who tried to keep the family afloat by teaching in a private school on weekdays and selling Tupperware products on weekends.

Dory hated the rallies but would attend them, though unseen by her husband, her trembling hands holding a handful of sand and dirt to throw in the faces of riot police that often lunged at her husband as he addressed the crowds.

In hiding

Villanueva went back to law school after martial law was declared in 1972. He would soon find out that Marcos' agents were still on his trail with shoot-to-kill orders.

He went into hiding in his father's house in Bulacan, but woke up one day to find military men surrounding the house. He miraculously escaped and left for Bicol and Quezon where he and his colleagues spent months in hiding.

Villanueva's father Joaquin, an Olympic sprinter and a retired military man, pulled some strings with his officer friends in the military and managed to have his son's name removed from the wanted list.

"I have survived all kinds of battles in my past life, that's why no one can scare me except God and sin," says Villanueva, who has been a preacher for the past 25 years.

Pivotal point

His return to Bulacan in 1973 was a pivotal point in his life. His mother, Maria, had lost a 1,700 sq meter .property in Bocaue to a land-grabbing syndicate operating in the countryside.

True to form, Villanueva organized all 20 victims of the syndicate and filed charges against the group which included a prosecutor, several lawyers and a rich couple. He collected evidence and brought these to Camp Crame. He labored for months on the case, but nothing happened.

Return to the hills

In his frustration, he told his family and the victims that he would go back to the hills and return only to take care of eliminating the people that deserved to be eliminated.

He told his wife Dory about his decision and left a book titled "The Laws of Success" to his eldest son, who was then a toddler, writing in the dedication: "Never make an enemy of the masses. Always side with them."

He was stopped only by a letter from his sister Leni, a former activist who had migrated to the United States and become a born-again Christian.

"Before it was too late, the Lord arrested me," he recalls.

Villanueva prayed and read the Bible, as Leni suggested, from 9:30 p.m. to 2:30 a.m. He confessed his concerns and anger at God and asked for His presence.

"It was strange but I suddenly felt peace," he says. About a week later, the family received a favorable decision on the land-grabbing case and the usurers were arrested.

Villanueva said he was "intrigued" by the miracle and the communist was soon holding Bible study groups in his home. He developed such a fire for Jesus that he approached his former comrades to share that he had "discovered the Lord."

JIL core group

He taught at PUP from 1978 to 1979 and there started conducting Bible studies among his students. This small group would be the birth of the JIL, which now has about five million members worldwide.

He insists though that the JIL membership does not form the bulk of his votes which he said would come from the "silent majority."

"I know very well that this is against conventional wisdom, fighting the Goliaths of this bankrupt political system we have," Villanueva says.

God-factor

"But I have absolute trust... that the God-factor would prevail on judgment day, that the majority will be reminded of the future of their children and will not sell their votes," said the man who is said to have caused Malacañang some sleepless nights.

Villanueva turned down the President's appeal to form a coalition with the administration party for the 2004 polls and instead confirmed the other day that he was "99 percent sure" of running for President.

Villanueva is perhaps the least known and the least funded of the known presidential aspirants. He refuses to launch a traditional campaign funded by unscrupulous businesses that would later seek concessions and cause the corruption that degrades the nation.

"Emotionally, physically, I'm at the peak of my health. I'm just a few months older than GMA. Spiritually and morally, I've been prepared for the last 30 years... I absolutely believe I'm more prepared than all these presidentiables, modesty aside, although I don't have any iota of interest in politics," he says.

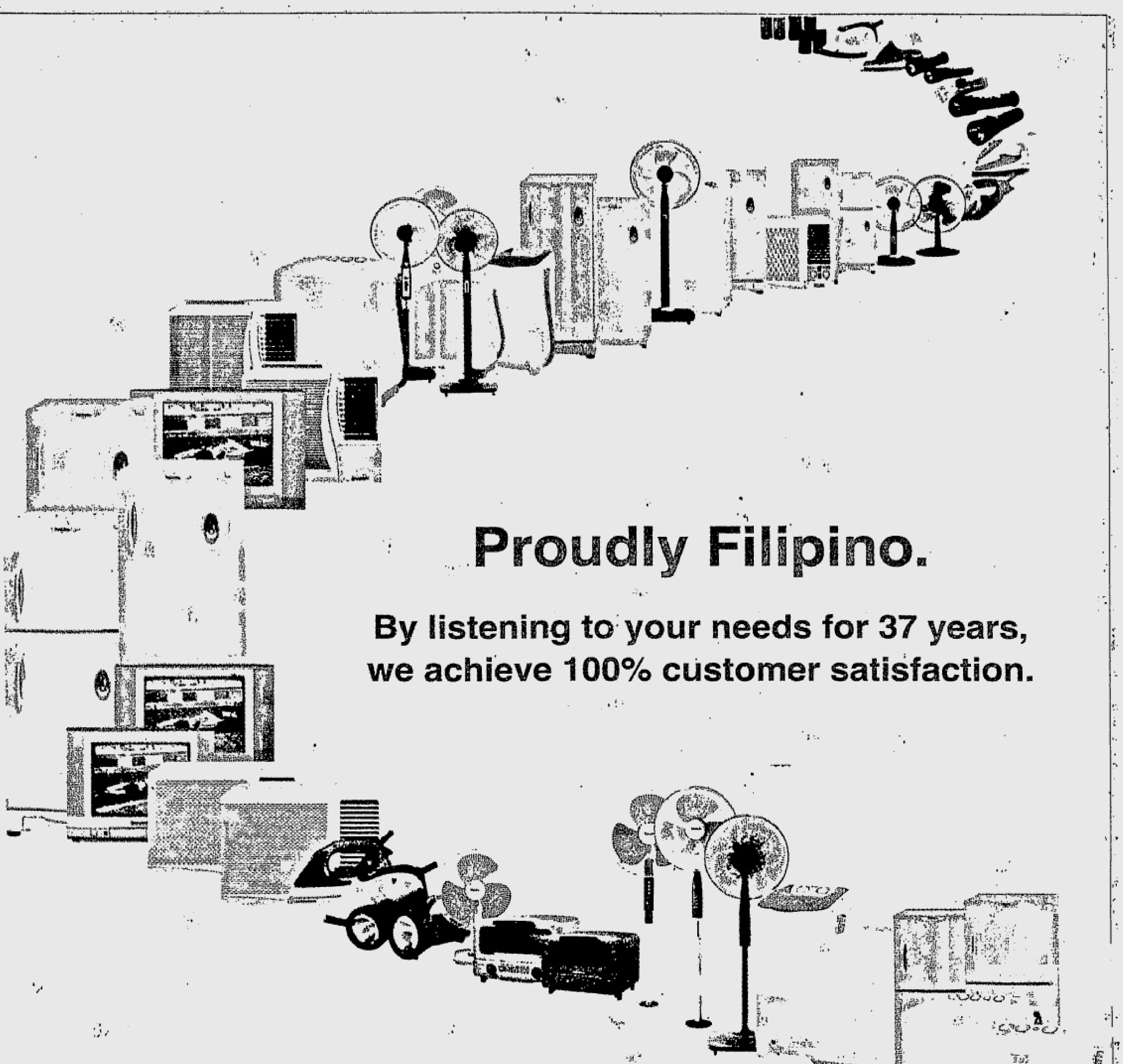
"Our leadership today is devoid of a passionate desire to fight for the honor and dignity of our people in the international community," he adds, recalling the plight of overseas Filipino workers who suffer in the hands of their employers.

Righteous leadership

It is a righteous, passionate leadership that he seeks to establish. He swears to work for a healing presidency and reach out to former comrades like Sison.

"Reconciliation is a divine word... if it is not used just as a political statement. It is what God used to bring the world to him through His son Jesus Christ. Once the Lord favors us, I would like to talk with them and ask them to give the government a chance," he says.

He would, after all, know what it is like.



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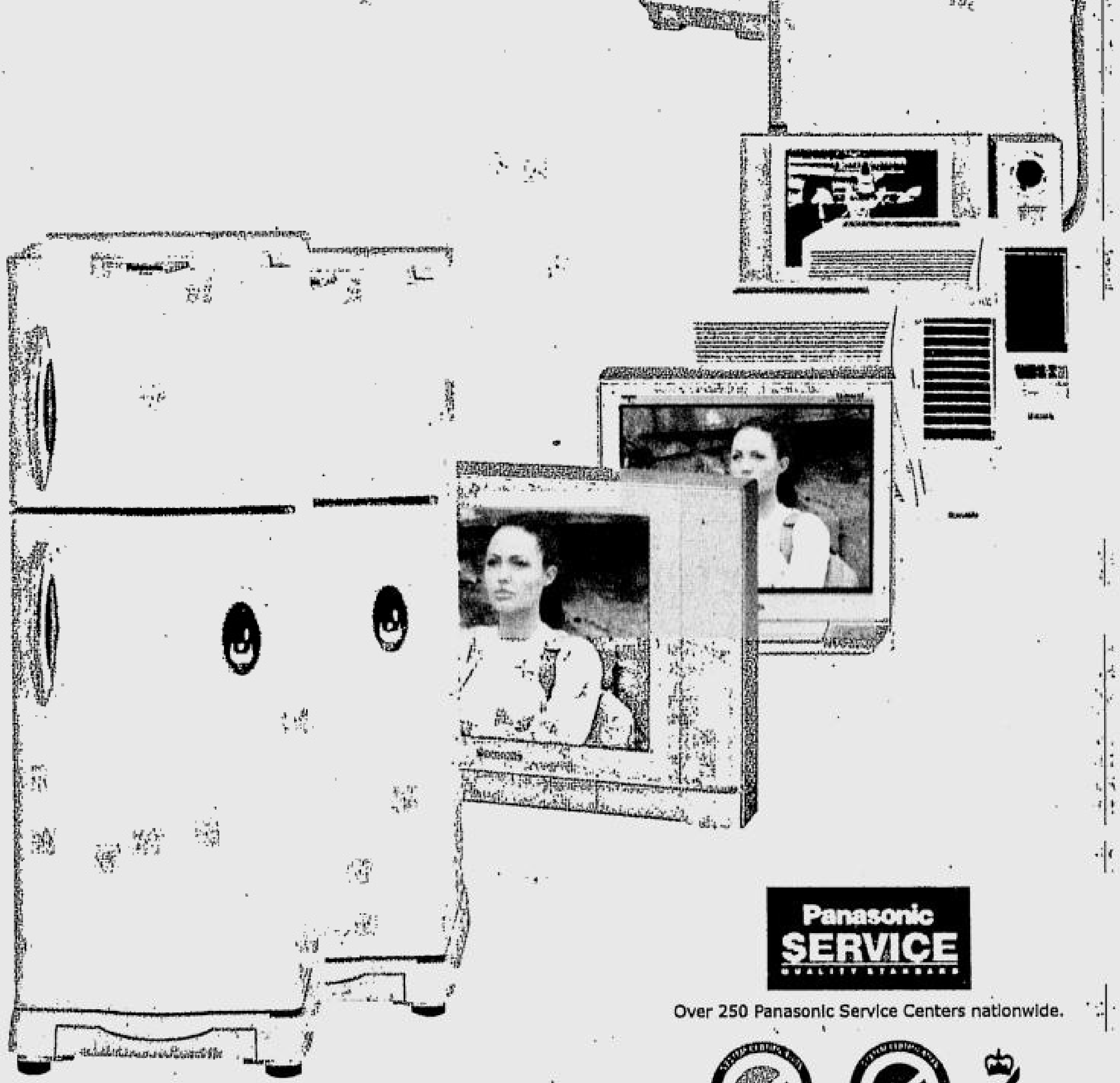

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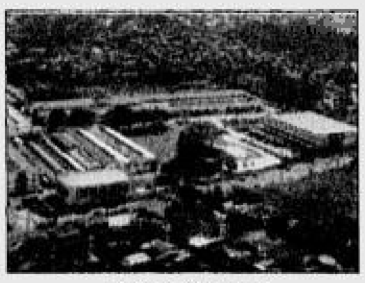

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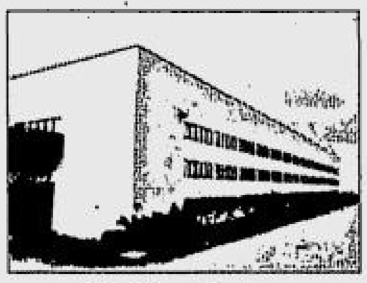

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Saddam betrayed by right hand man—US major

TIKRIT, Iraq—The Iraqi man who gave up Saddam Hussein to United States forces last weekend was his top aide through eight months on the lam, a senior US military intelligence officer told reporters.

"He was someone I would call his right arm," said Major Stan Murphy, the head of intelligence for the 4th Infantry Division's First Brigade in Saddam's hometown of Tikrit.

The major ruled out the possibility the informant, who is currently in detention, would receive any of the $25-million bounty on Saddam's head.

"He is a bad man and should rot in jail," he said.

The man, whose name the military will not reveal, was a longtime aide of Saddam and hailed from one of five major tribes in a 20-km stretch around Tikrit that the fallen dictator relied on to elude the Americans after Baghdad fell last April.

"He was in the five families. There were members of the five families that were in the security forces, the army" and the government, Murphy said.

Since April, Saddam's top lieutenant, along with four or five other Iraqis from the prominent Tikrit-area tribes, formed the inner circle that helped hide the fugitive dictator, implement his orders to the resistance for attacks, finance the insurgency and provide combatants with weaponry.

"He (Saddam) would give general guidance, 'hey I want to see more attacks, I want to see more of this.' His enablers would then go out to their different tiers below them, give a little more specific guidance, maybe some money or weapons or something, and that tier would go out to the other tiers all the way down to the trigger puller," Murphy said.

There were four to nine tiers of the resistance, Murphy added.

But while the other enablers shared the burden of labor and their functions overlapped, the man who eventually informed on Saddam was the fugitive strongman's most trusted confidante.

"In my mind, he was that important... to get the general guidance from Saddam and add specific details for everything," Murphy said.

The middle-aged man, whose name or job in the old regime Murphy refused to disclose, had started to serve Saddam in his late teens or early twenties and had risen to become one of Saddam's most valued sidekicks.

He also participated in the old regime's crimes against the Iraqi people, Murphy said, without disclosing the exact nature of his involvement in Saddam's abuses.

Among other responsibilities, Saddam's right hand man and the other three-to-four enablers supervised a two-man cell under them that was responsible for the logistics of moving Saddam around safehouses north and west of Baghdad where the fallen dictator counted tribal support, Murphy said.

While the military has estimated Saddam had 20-30 safehouses, Murphy believes there very well could have been more. He also suspects Saddam moved far less frequently than what the US commanders have suggested was every four hours.

Generally, Saddam traveled with a small group of aides who drove and cooked for him that came from a pool of about 20-25 people, again that hailed from the five families based around Tikrit, Murphy said.

A huge break in the case came with the arrest of several of Saddam's top enablers in September and October. Coupled with a rush of intelligence at the end of November, a no-holds barred search began for the individual who would betray Saddam.

After escaping three raids the first week of December in Tikrit, Samarra and Baiji, he was captured in Baghdad on December 12 where he was most likely plotting more attacks on the coalition, Murphy said

The man was then brought to Tikrit where, under interrogation, he confessed Saddam was hiding at one of two locations in Ad-Dawr a small farming community down the road from Tikrit.

As US special forces searched the palm groves around two farms, Saddam's most-trusted aide pointed to the secret underground room where the former Iraqi president was hiding, Murphy said. *AFP*

A VENDOR in Baghdad employs news about Saddam's capture to keep out the sun. REUTERS

What about Karadzic, Mladic in Balkans?

By Calin Neacsu

SARAJEVO—While the Iraqi desert could not hide Saddam Hussein, the Balkans' top war crimes fugitives, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, have evaded international justice for more than eight years.

Bosnian Serb wartime leader Karadzic and his military chief Mladic have been charged with war crimes and genocide by the UN court at The Hague over their alleged role in Bosnia's 1992-1995 war, notably the Srebrenica massacre of more than 7,000 Muslims and the siege of Sarajevo.

Analysts are divided over how the two have eluded capture for so long while Saddam was caught near his hometown of Tikrit earlier this month, less than a year after his brutal regime fell to US-led troops.

Some say that the Balkans duo still remain at large because there is no political will to track them down, while others argue that it is simply a matter of resources.

"Saddam's capture presents yet another indication that the main problem with the arrest of Karadzic is not a technical issue, but obviously the lack of political will," said Senad Slatina of the Brussels-based International Crisis Group think-tank.

Some 12,000 NATO-led peacekeepers, deployed in Bosnia since the end of the conflict, are tasked with the arrest of war crimes suspects, especially Karadzic who is said to be hiding in the mountainous republic.

They have conducted several high-profile operations and raids as part of the search but repeatedly come up empty-handed, leading the UN's chief war crimes prosecutor Carla del Ponte to dismiss their efforts as "propaganda" stunts.

"In Iraq, there are more than 200,000 soldiers within a coalition led by the United States and their principal mission was to detain Saddam Hussein," said a Western diplomat who requested anonymity.

Saddam, he said, was a dictator hated by many Iraqis who were ready to betray him, while Karadzic and Mladic were seen as heroes by the majority of people in the Bosnian Serb entity and neighboring Serbia-Montenegero.

"It is useless to search for Mladic in Serbia," said Dusan Janjic, a Belgrade-based analyst, referring to Del Ponte's repeated claims that the former commander is hiding in the country with Belgrade's knowledge.

"The fact that he has not been found until now proves the incompetence of the (peacekeepers) in Bosnia. They are not capable of gathering information which could lead to Mladic's arrest.

"One can also raise questions over the competence of the UN war crimes tribunal chief prosecutor (Del Ponte), who is too often guided by rumors." *AFP*

PEACE PRAYERS

Buddhist monks pray for peace at the Borobudur Temple in Magelang, Central Java Dec. 19. Some 200 monks from around the world gathered at the famed temple onFriday for mass prayers. REUTERS

India welcomes Pakistan offer to junk call for Kashmir poll

SRINAGAR, India/CHAKOTHI, Pakistan—India welcomed on Friday Pakistan's surprise offer to set aside its decades-old demand for a UN-mandated referendum on the future of the disputed Kashmir region.

Indian Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha, in New Delhi's first reaction to Islamabad's offer, said his government would always be ready to accept any change in the Pakistani position that a plebiscite in Kashmir was the only way out of the thorny dispute that has plagued relations between the nuclear-armed neighbors.

"We have always suggested flexibility," Sinha told reporters on Friday.

In an interview with Reuters on Wednesday, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf offered to set aside Islamabad's 50-year-old demand to implement U.N. resolutions calling for both sides to withdraw troops and for Kashmiris to decide in a vote on whether to be part of India or Pakistan.

Sinha said: "It is Pakistan which has been rigid, it is Pakistan which talks about the centrality of the issue. So if there is any change or modification in the Pakistani position, that's something which India will always be ready to welcome."

On both sides of the divided Himalayan region, the trigger for two of three wars between the rival neighbors, the offer spurred quiet hopes for peace as well as charges of betrayal.

In the heart of Kashmir, in the ancient Indian-controlled city of Srinagar, people had earlier urged India to respond positively to Musharraf's apparent concession.

"India has to reciprocate...only then a solution is possible. Only then our sufferings, miseries and hardships will end," said Mohammad Maqbool, houseboat owner on Srinagar's famous mountain-fringed Dal Lake, on Friday.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed in a 14-year insurgency on the Indian side of Kashmir, its only Muslim-majority state, while tourists have been driven away and the economy devastated. *Reuters*

France, Japan compete for $10-B nuclear reactor

WASHINGTON—France and Japan stepped up lobbying ahead of Saturday's decision by the major nuclear powers on where to put an experimental nuclear fusion reactor as part of the multi-billion dollar ITER project.

The choice between the French town of Cadarache and Rokkasho-mura in northern Japan is to be made at a ministerial meeting at Reston, Virginia, in the Washington suburbs.

The reactor is expected to cost about $10 billion but French officials estimate the project could bring 30 billion dollars to the economy of the chosen venue over 30 years.

The ITER consortium—which hopes to find a limitless energy source from nuclear fusion—is made up of the European Union, Japan, Canada, China, Russia, South Korea and the United States, which quit the project in 1998 but returned in January as President George W. Bush changed his energy policy.

The European Union is backing France, after the Spanish town of Vandellos withdrew in November, but the United States could play a decisive role in the decision.

A French government envoy, Pierre Lellouche, said "very intense" talks were being held at a high level Friday before the meeting on the reactor venue.

France's Research Minister Claudie Haignere and the European Union Research Commissioner Philippe Busquin were expected in Washington on Friday night to join the lobbying. French officials said that if no consensus is reached Saturday, it may be put off until January.

A Japanese diplomatic source, meanwhile, said bilateral meetings were being held Friday with the United States, the European Union, South Korea and Russia ahead of Saturday's decision.

"We are still very hopeful," the source said.

ITER—Latin for "the way"—aims to be a test bed for what is being billed as the clean, safe, inexhaustible energy source of the future. The project is not expected to generate electricity however before 2050.

The Japanese site has many assets: proximity to a port, a ground of solid bedrock and a nearby American military base which means that Rokkasho-mura already has the services available to accommodate foreign researchers in a comfortable environment.

The French bid offers an existing research facility and a more moderate climate. *AFP*

AUSTRONESIAN SPIRIT

Indonesian dancers perform a traditional dance during the opening ceremony of the fourth Austronesian Cultural FEstival; inTaitung, eastern Taiwan, Dec 20. The 11-day festival is held in order to show the true spirit of Taiwan, the home town of the Austronesian. AFP

Iraq's crushing debt: Why did the West lend so much to Saddam?

By Ken Guggnheim

WASHINGTON—Iraq is swamped by more than $120 billion in debt that clouds its economic future. Where did it come from? Why did so many Western democracies, including the United States, lend so much money to President Saddam Hussein? What happens now?

A look at the situation:

Q: How much does Iraq owe?

A: That figure is not known precisely but generally is considered to be more than $120 billion, not counting an additional $200 billion in war reparations. Of the $120 billion, Iraq owes $40 billion to the 19-nation Paris Club, which includes the United States, France, Germany, Japan and Russia.

Q: How did Iraq accumulate such a large debt?

A: Most of the money went to the military. Saddam ordered the invasion of Iran in 1980, fought an eight-year war with Iraq's neighbor and continued to amass his forces after the war ended in 1988. By the time of the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq was believed to have had the world's fourth-largest military.

Q: Why would Western countries lend Saddam money to help build his army?

A: Before it invaded Kuwait to set off the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Iraq was not considered as much of an international pariah. It had good relations with the Soviet Union, and the United States and many other Western nations at least privately hoped Iraq would prevail against the theocrats who ruled Iran. The United States claimed neutrality, but it clearly wanted an Iraqi victory in the bloody conflict.

In addition, Iraq was a good client for private arms merchants. "It was probably a pretty good moneymaking venture," said Bathsheba Crocker of the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank in Washington.

Q: Was Saddam considered a good credit risk?

A: Yes. Iraq has the second-largest proven reserves of oil in the world. Before it invaded Kuwait, few could have imagined that it would fight a disastrous war against a U.S.-led coalition, undergo 12 years of ruinous international sanctions, then fight yet another U.S.-led war.

"I've never seen any concern about credit worthiness," said Justin Alexander of the London-based Jubilee Iraq, which advocates debt forgiveness.

Q: How much is the debt to the United States and how was it developed?

A: Iraq is believed to owe the United States about $4 billion, including interest. Most of the debt is thought to involve U.S. financing for Iraqi agriculture. Many close friends of the United States provided billions of dollars in military help to Iraq during the 1980s war, but little hard evidence has been published that the United States provided much more than technical military aid.

Q: How much is the Russian debt, and how was it incurred?

A: The debt is about $8 billion including interest. Much of it appears to have been accrued from military sales during the Soviet era.

Q: Saddam has been deposed and no longer runs Iraq. Are new governments expected to take on a toppled regime's debt?

A: Traditionally, yes. *AP*

UN: 4 million N. Koreans could lose food aid

BEIJING—Nearly four million North Koreans will be deprived of United Nations food rations by February if foreign donors do not provide more aid to the communist state, the head of the UN World Food Programme said on Saturday.

The comments by WFP Executive Director James Morris followed an emergency appeal last week for $171 million worth of rations to feed 6.5 million North Koreans, mostly women and children, plagued by years of hunger compounded by shock price reforms.

With the timing of a second round of six-way negotiations to curtail North Korea's nuclear arms program still uncertain, Chinese and US officials met in Beijing on Friday to discuss the way forward.

The WFP says it needs the $171 million to offset a drop in contributions, which in 2003 has already forced the WFP to cut off rations to several million North Koreans fed by the agency since the mid-1990s.

"We are about 60 percent resourced for this year," Morris told a news conference in Beijing. "And that means in January we'll probably stop feeding about three million people."

He said a gift from Russia would help sustain the food pipeline for about a month, but, without additional support, the number of North Koreans affected would rise to "something in the neighborhood of 3.8 million people" from February.

North Korea has suffered food shortages since at least 1995, when it first appealed for aid after floods compounded years of economic mismanagement and the loss of its main patron, the Soviet Union.

Since last year, donor fatigue has been exacerbated by North Korea's political isolation over its attempts to build nuclear weapons, and by US suspicions that food aid is diverted away from the needy to the country's military and political elite.

China hosted an initial round of inconclusive talks with the United States, North and South Korea, Japan and Russia in August, and has been trying to bring the parties together for a follow-up round.

After months of intensive efforts, the United States and its partners in negotiations over North Korea's nuclear program acknowledged this week that they were unable to arrange a second round of talks for this month.

But despite delays that have pushed any possibility of fresh six-party talks into 2004, a senior US official said on Friday it was too early to say diplomatic efforts had failed.

Food aid to North Korea from the United States, which averaged 155,000 tons of food a year, dropped to 40,000 tons in 2003, Morris said.

Last week, the WFP pressed the United States to release an additional 60,000 tons of food pledged but held up because Pyongyang has yet to let donors track its distribution and allow access to malnourished people in all parts of the country.

"We desperately need that and hope that it will come," Morris said of the US pledge.

However, he acknowledged that North Korea has failed to provide a list of beneficiary institutions it once promised and still bars the WFP from more than 40 out of its 206 counties where about 15 percent of North Korea's 23 million people live.

"The issues are not essentially political issues or military issues or nuclear issues," Morris said. "They're issues of North Korea's need to be accountable, accessible and transparent like every other country we serve."

Reuters

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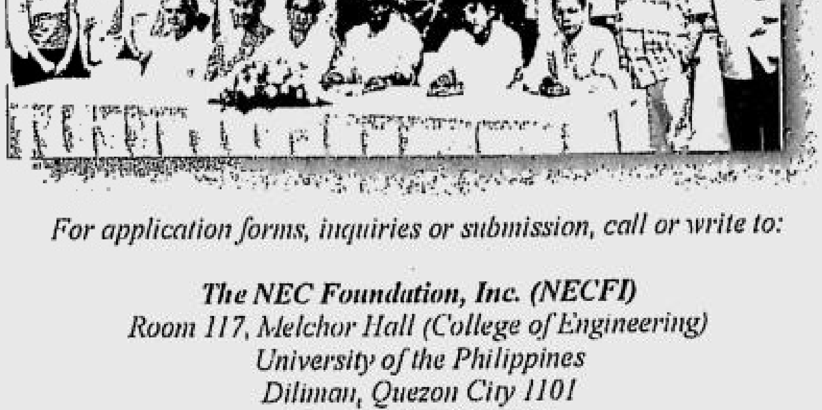
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US jury awards undocumented worker

SAN FRANCISCO—Macan Singh left a village in India and came to the United States to work for an employer he says promised him an education and his own business one day.

Instead, Singh says he ended up working 12-hour shifts, seven days a week for three years — for no pay. After Singh, an undocumented immigrant, filed a claim for unpaid wages, his employer allegedly reported him to federal immigration officials. He was detained for almost 15 months.

It was a nightmare made even worse by the fact that Singh's employer was his own uncle, his attorneys say.

A federal court jury Thursday ordered Singh's uncle and aunt, Charanjit and Davinder Jutla, to pay $200,000 in compensatory and punitive damages for reporting him to the government.

"I've waited a long time for this day," Singh, 33, said in Punjabi through a translator. "I thought that I would have a good life here."

The uncle and aunt were "shocked and disappointed" by the verdict, said Sandra McNabb, their attorney.

But Singh's attorneys called the verdict an important victory for undocumented workers.

"It sends a very loud and strong message to employers that they will be held accountable, that undocumented workers do have the same rights and remedies under the laws regardless of their immigration status," said one of Singh's attorneys, Marielena Hincapie of the National Immigration Law Center. "If they exploit workers, they will be held accountable."

No single law dictates the rights of undocumented workers, or what recourse they have if employers threaten to report them to immigration officials. Instead, a patchwork of federal statutes and decisions in previous court cases helps determine what rights they have, said Marshall Fitz, associate director of advocacy at the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

In one of those cases, the Supreme Court ruled last year that Hoffman Plastic Compounds did not owe back pay to an undocumented immigrant employee who said he was laid off after supporting efforts to unionize a company plant.

"Awarding back pay to illegal aliens runs counter to policies underlying" federal immigration laws, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist wrote in the court's opinion.

Since that decision, some employers have argued that undocumented immigrants aren't entitled to the same damages as other workers, Hincapie said. But the jury's decision Thursday shows otherwise, she said.

Singh said he plans to use some of the money to seek medical treatment for headaches and backaches he suffered while in detention.

"I had a lot of problems there mentally because my own uncle did this to me," said Singh, his eyes filling with tears.

Singh came to the United States in 1995 and was forced to work long hours at his uncle's two gas stations, according to court documents. McNabb said her clients deny that claim.

After three years, Singh said he asked to be paid but was fired. He filed a wage claim with the California Labor Commissioner, winning an award of almost $70,000. The case was appealed and settled out of court. After Singh signed the agreement, his relatives reported him to the immigration agency, said Christopher Ho, another of Singh's lawyers.

Today, Singh's future is uncertain. He's working at a Bay Area convenience store under a temporary work permit and is in deportation proceedings, though he's applied for a visa for victims of human trafficking.

ACCUSED sniper suspect John Lee Malvo walks out of the Fairfax Country Juvenile Court House Nov. 19, 2002, in Fairfax, Virginia. Malvo has been found guilty of capital murder Dec. 18, 2003. AFP

Tears, fury at sentencing of young sniper

CHESAPEAKE, Virginia—Each day when Katrina Hannum rises, she cries. When the sun sets, she fears sleep—worried that the visions of her mother being shot in the head in a brightly lit parking lot will visit her again.

A jury determined this week that 18-year-old sniper Lee Boyd Malvo fired the high-powered rifle that killed Linda Franklin at a store last year, and now it must decide whether Malvo should be executed for the murder.

"I'm afraid to go to sleep," Hannum testified Friday during the sentencing phase of the trial. "Almost every night I have to watch that man shoot my mother in the head."

Hannum said Franklin raised her children well, despite being a single parent. She became a civil servant, moving her children around the world with her, and eventually joined the FBI.

Franklin couldn't wait for the birth of Hannum's daughter, and just missed feeling her grandchild's first kick before she was killed Oct. 14, 2002. She was 47.

Nine others were killed in the three-week Washington D.C.-area shooting spree, including Pascal Charlot, a 72-year-old Haitian immigrant.

"Because of you, he didn't have a chance to see his great-grandchild. That's insane of you to do. You're evil," Myrtha Cinada, Charlot's daughter, told Malvo from the witness stand Friday.

Malvo hung his head during her scolding but showed little other emotion as prosecutors called on the victims' relatives to relay the impact of the deaths to the jurors, eight women and four men.

When prosecutors finished, defense attorneys called witnesses who testified that Malvo was a bright, obedient boy who had a childhood that was disjointed and lacking a father figure. Esmie McLeod, the vice principal of a Jamaican school Malvo attended, wept as she recalled fearing for Malvo's future. He was 17 at the time of the shooting spree.

Malvo's attorneys had argued that their client was insane at the time of the spree because he had been brainwashed by sniper mastermind John Allen Muhammad, whom he considered his father.

Seoul confirms spread of bird flu infections

SEOUL—An outbreak of a highly contagious strain of bird flu has spread in South Korea, which plans to slaughter hundreds of thousands of ducks and chickens and disinfect farms to contain it.

Agriculture ministry officials reported two new cases of the virus, which can be deadly for humans, from one duck farm on Saturday and said experts were testing for three more suspected cases at another.

The country confirmed its first case of bird flu among chickens at a farm about 80 km southeast of the capital Seoul on Monday. Since then, 129,000 chickens and ducks have been slaughtered in a bid to curb the outbreak.

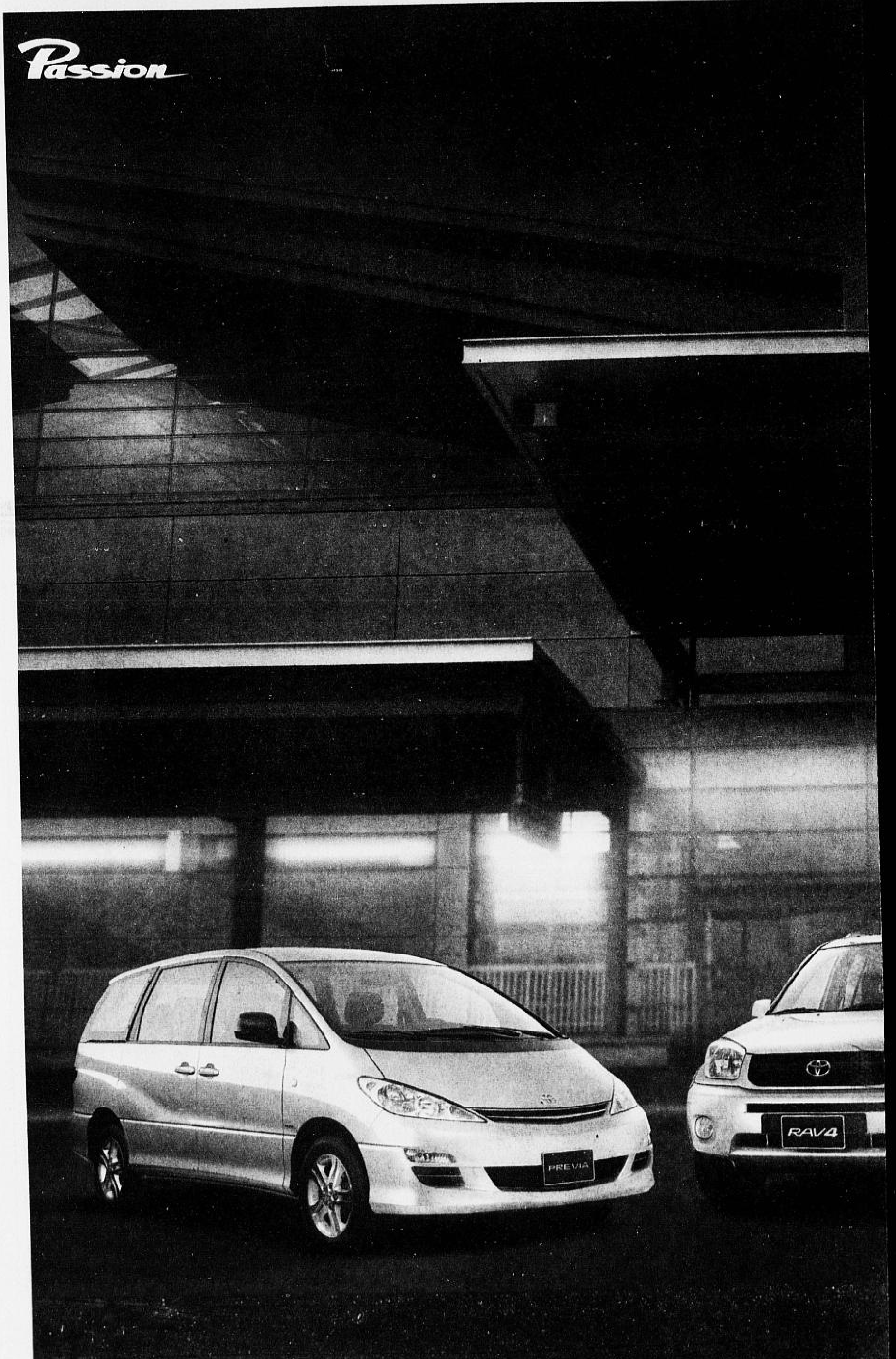
The duck farm with the new cases is in a four-km radius of the first confirmed case.

"The outcome showed suspected cases tested positive for bird flu," an agriculture ministry official said. "There are about 16,000 ducks in the farm which would all be destroyed."

The ministry said since these cases were confirmed, about 400,000 poultry in a three-to-10 km (two-to-six mile) zone would be slaughtered.

A variant of avian influenza identified as H5N1 killed six people in Hong Kong in 1997 and 1998. South Korean authorities have asked for US help to check whether the latest virus has the same gene as that strain.

Hundreds of people living in the affected areas have been given blood tests, although no one has shown symptoms of the disease.



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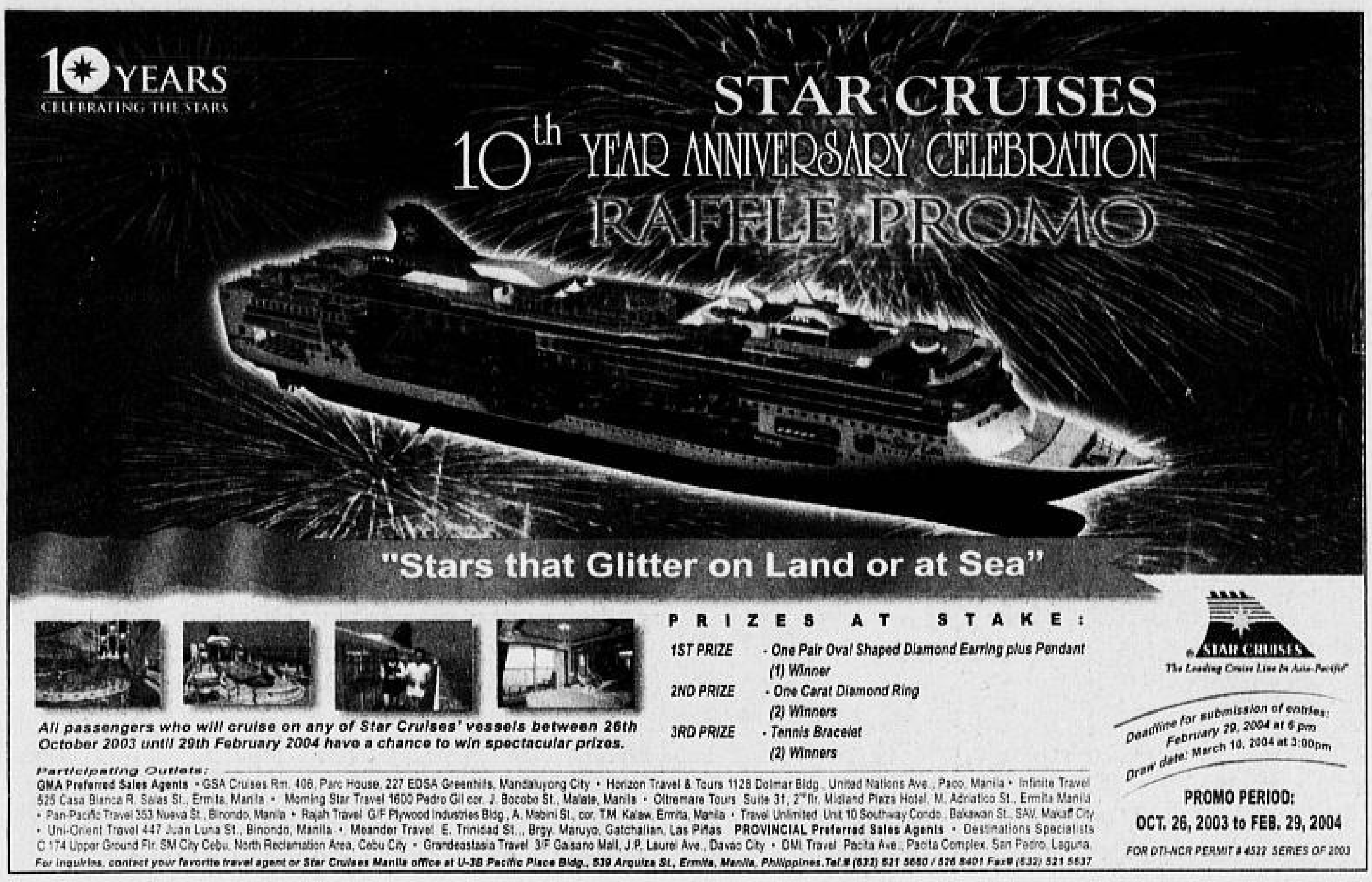
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A TAIWANESE street performer uses a face mask while playing his bamboo flute in Taipei on Dec. 20. A Taiwan medical researcher at a military hospital has tested positive for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), reviving an old scare in the island. REUTERS

Scientist got SARS from lab, says Taiwan

TAIPEI—A Taiwan military scientist diagnosed with SARS likely contracted the lethal flu-like virus as he tried to disinfect a contaminated trash bag, initial findings have shown.

Investigators said the scientist, a 44-year-old medical researcher, opened a closed cabinet in his military laboratory when he found a leaking plastic bag with a small amount of liquid on Dec. 6, a day before he was scheduled to leave for a seminar in Singapore.

He tried to disinfect the bag with alcohol spray, according to an initial report issued by the government late on Friday.

"Chan probably tried to open the cabinet that should have been completely sealed in an attempt to clean up the bag, which allowed a small amount of the virus to escape," chief investigator Chang Shang-tsun told a news conference.

The scientist tested positive for SARS this week, fanning fears of a resurgence of the disease in Asia, which bore the brunt of a virulent outbreak of SARS that killed hundreds of people earlier this year. The man is now in stable condition.

Worldwide, the last SARS outbreak infected about 8,000 people and killed about 800. Many of Asia's economies were battered.

The investigators' initial report did not mention whether the scientist had proper protection gear, saying it still needed to confirm details with him after his condition improved.

Dr. Shigeru Omi, the WHO's regional director, told reporters on Wednesday the Taiwan scientist may not have followed proper laboratory procedures. "Initial information is he was not wearing a proper gown and lab gear for protection," Omi said.

"There were lapses in WHO procedures."

The scientist, identified as Lieutenant-Colonel Chan from the Institute of Preventive Medicine at the National Defence University, was working on a government-commissioned project to study effects of Chinese herbal medicine on SARS.

His father told local media that the scientist had stayed at home for five days, refusing to seek medical help, after realizing he might have contracted the deadly virus. *Reuters*

US doctor jailed for lowering cancer drug doses

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida—A urologist received prison time for giving dozens of prostate cancer patients lowered dosages of medication, then billing them for the full amount.

Dr. Victor Souaid was sentenced Friday to four years and three months in federal prison. He pleaded guilty in September to 59 counts of health care fraud and unlicensed wholesale distribution of a prescription drug, Lupron.

Souaid has already surrendered his medical license.

In Souaid's plea agreement, prosecutors agreed to drop a product tampering charge for allegedly diluting the drug. He could have faced up to 590 years in prison before the deal.

Lupron doesn't cure prostate cancer but is supposed to stop the cancer from worsening by halting production of testosterone.

Souaid billed his patients' insurance companies between $644 and $693 for an office visit and injection with the drug. He billed the companies for up to four times the amount of the drug he administered.

More than 40 percent of 100 patients the FBI contacted showed testosterone levels at or near normal. If they had received Lupron in the amounts Souaid had purported, they should have shown little or none of the male hormone.

Prosecutors also said Souaid sold to wholesale broker $1.4 million worth of Lupron that was supposed to go to patients. He did not have a license to sell the drugs. *AP*

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OPINION

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The candidates

EDITORIAL

THE FIRST one, appropriately, was "Juan de la Cruz." The best one, arguably, was Salve "Bush," who said she maintained special relations with US President George W. Bush via television—which may or may not be the reason she was running for president. (She didn't say.) The most "promising" seemed to be German Valladarez of Silay City, who proposed an ingenious way to defend the country against national-security threats: He said he will integrate all armed groups, including communist insurgents and Moro separatists, into one unit, with each group assigned a day of the week to handle security. (He didn't say if the Abu Sayyaf deserved a day of its own.)

The political circus officially set up camp on Dec. 15, when the first of many presidential aspirants filed their certificates of candidacy with the Commission on Elections. A man named Leopoldo Salud was first in line; he listed his occupation quite specifically as information technology salesman. Rigoberto Madera's was considerably broader, encompassing the virtual world, real life, and the hereafter. He listed his job as "Messiah."

Most of us got a good laugh out of the first candidates, whose wildly improbable candidacies provided another occasion for merrymaking just as the Christmas season got underway. But their example is an object lesson in civics too. And the professional politicians they mimic—down to sweeping, unfulfillable promises—all too often become ridiculous too.

Opposition leader Sen. Edgardo Angara, for instance, has maneuvered to bestow the blessings of the "united opposition" on his candidate of choice. First it was businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. Now it is Cojuangco's presumed preference, movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. The maneuverings have been so unsubtle his own LDP partymates have cried foul. After forcing party member and presidential aspirant Sen. Panfilo Lacson out of the "selection process" he had himself designed, Angara gave the go-signal for the opposition coalition to choose Poe.

"You have to make a decision at a certain point. I think that's essential in any organization," Angara lectured reporters, as though he was the latest management guru to come a-visiting. But that certain point, he somehow forgot to explain, came when an exasperated Lacson finally saw through the stacked deck and quit Angara's game, thus clearing the way for FPJ. To the best of our knowledge, Angara kept a straight face during the impromptu lecture.

But he did not stop there. In the face of obvious disunity in the ranks of the opposition, he made the following, startling claim. "Now that the entire opposition has been organized and the unification is finished, [we will] take care of internal problems." By problems, he was of course referring to Lacson's candidacy, the split in the LDP, and the exodus of some LDP members to other parties. Thus, the mere fact that the internal problems existed means that the unification of the opposition was, in truth, far from finished. None of these facts seemed to bother Angara, however. He resolved the problem by issuing a sweeping statement.

If this is the way a former president of the University of the Philippines, a former Senate president, a former executive secretary, dissembles in public, how can we expect those with little access to power and less learning to conduct themselves in more dignified fashion? Or, to put it in another way, what is the difference between the pie-in-the-sky statements of the nuisance candidates and Angara's own spin?

We can say this much for the first candidates: they have the courage of their convictions. Unlike those who prefer to work by proxy, they have put themselves on the line. They are, however temporarily, running for office.

Uncertain victory

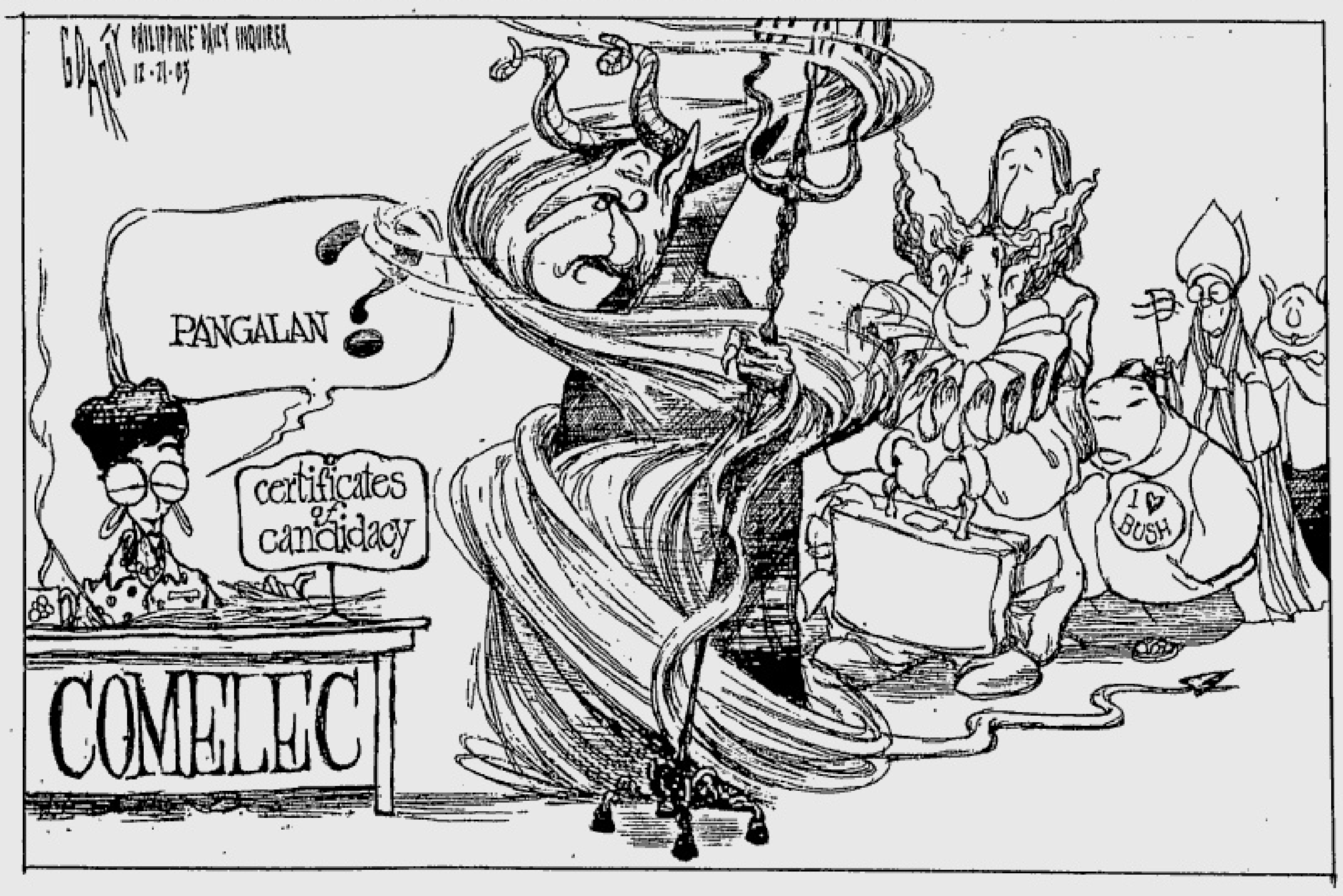
FOREIGN COMMENT

IF the situation in Iraq does not improve, if Americans are killed at a frightening regularity, the Sunday success (capture of Saddam) may be forgotten when the Americans go to the polls next year.

On top of that, the opposition's main arguments are still there.

Still no weapons of mass destruction have been found; one could still say that Osama bin Laden is a bigger threat to the United States than Saddam Hussein ever was; and one could still say that American foreign policy has created unnecessary international tensions.

What the Democrats need, among other things, to win in November is a candidate who can forward the criticism without being pulled to pieces by his own. *Dagens Nyheter (Stockholm, Sweden)*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I ♥ BUSH

Yuletide thoughts

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

AS this column appears only on weekends and Christmas comes this Thursday, I will take this opportunity now to wish my friends and readers the best of Yuletide cheer. I hope they will enjoy the warmth of this loveliest feast of Christendom in the bosom of their families, including those relatives from abroad who have come back to their native land to savor our traditional celebration of the birth of the Infant Lord.

That celebration is beautiful and unique. It reflects our people's deep religiosity for a God who looks after them and makes them face their fears without despair because of their faith in His protection. Even the dispossessed among us share this belief; their lack of material blessings has not diminished their faith in the providence of God. Who "moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform." The happiness of Christmas is shared in this country by all the people, the poor and the rich alike, and also the non-Christians.

The reason is that Christmas proclaims the message of Peace on Earth and Goodwill to All Men (and Women and Children too) of all faiths and in all lands. It was that universal ideal preached to all mankind on that blessed night in Bethlehem when Jesus Christ was born to the Virgin Mary and the angels sang their hymns of joy to welcome Him to His earthly life.

That goal, regrettably, has remained elusive through all these many centuries even as war continues to scar the world and weapons of hate and destruction have increased in wickedness and ferocity. Yet, as if to emphasize that all is not lost and peace will ultimately prevail among men of goodwill, it has become the practice among deathly enemies to suspend hostilities during the Yuletide, to lay down their arms and forget their anger for the nonce out of respect for Christmas Day.

Our government is following this practice with the suspension this year, as in previous years, of military operations against the NPA, the Communist group that does not believe in God. The unilateral ceasefire started on Dec. 10 and will continue until Jan. 6 next year, the feast of the Three Kings who visited the newborn Child. The cooperation of the dissident groups, despite their atheism, can offer the hope that agreement can also be reached with them on political and other hostile matters. Christmas can be a moderating and unifying influence.

Meanwhile, our Christian population is preparing to enjoy Christmas Day and eagerly awaiting it. Already, department stores and office buildings are blooming with gay-colored lights, and the streets are vying with each other in the beauty and originality of their decorations. Not to be outdone, the private houses are ablaze at night with series lights of all shapes and hues, numbering by the hundreds due particularly to their reduced costs now compared to previous years. Some houses have in fact become tourist attractions because of the artistry and splendor of their illumination.

The Three Wise Men made the ritual of gift-giving part of the celebration of Christmas when they worshiped the Infant Lord with their reverent offerings of gold, frankincense and myrrh. That religious gesture has long since been exploited by the merchants who have emphasized presents on Christmas as obligatory evidence of love, affection, loyalty, appreciation and other sentiments. Gifts are for sweethearts, relatives, friends, the boss, the helpful teller, and the security guard. All of them expect some thoughtfulness on Christmas. And the department stores have everything for them, from jewelry to perfumes to shirts to books to belts to food to cash.

Christmas has lost much of its spirituality and has become more and more mercenary because of the cupidity of the money-makers. They are ably assisted by the advertisers whose enticements, most of them deceptive, leave many people in financial straits they will have to mend after the extravagance of the Yuletide. This is especially true of our people, who are fond of merry-making and incur extraordinary expenses at the slightest pretext, as demonstrated by our lavish town fiestas in even the poorest communities. Christmas certainly is the most valid of all excuses to celebrate.

Fortunately, there are still many among us who appreciate the real value of Christmas as the best day in the year for the manifestation of our adoration of the Infant Jesus. It is also the opportunity for the affirmation of family love, the strengthening of present friendships, and the renewal of past ties best remembered, somewhat penitently, in this season of goodwill. And lest we forget, Christmas is also for those who cannot enjoy the simple joys of the season because their only abundance is of want and impossible dreams. We must give them some comfort in commemoration of that night more than 2,000 years ago when the star lit the way to the Babe in the manger and the salvation of the world.

Have a good day on Christmas Day, and may our happiness last all throughout the coming New Year!

Present?

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STORY is told about three brothers, who, after years of hard work and leading busy lives, wanted to make their 83-year-old mother happy especially on Christmas Day. To make up for the years when they neglected and took her for granted, the eldest gifted her with a big house, the second son gifted her with a limousine, and the youngest gifted her with an expensive parrot that could recite the whole Bible. After the holidays, they received a thank you note from their mother. To the first one she wrote: "Thank you for the house, but it is so big I can't clean it by myself." To the second one, she wrote: "The car is beautiful, but I never use it because I have nowhere to go." To the youngest, she wrote: "You gave me the best gift. The chicken was delicious!"

* * *

The Gospel today (Lk. 1, 39-45) speaks about Mary setting out to personally visit her cousin Elizabeth. Mary went out of her way to be personally present with her.

As we prepare for Christmas, let us be reminded again that our presents are a poor substitute for our presence. Your presents are good, but your presence is better, and your heart is best.

* * *

There will be a lot of gift-giving this Christmas. In fact, people are already stressed and busy making lists and buying special gifts, but many will end up not giving any gift to the birthday Celebrator Himself. There will be a lot of parties and reunions in His honor, but He will not be invited at all.

Christmas is Christ's birthday. Let us make sure that we be personally present to Him and give Him the best present of all: our hearts, filled with humility, love and joy.

* * *

Mary teaches us to go out of our comfort zones and reach out to people, especially this Christmas. She who was in the family way, went out of her way to bring goodness and joy.

It is easy to enjoy the cozy holiday feelings in the privacy of our homes, among relatives and friends. Perhaps we even make ourselves feel good with a little donation on the side. Whatever you do this Christmas, do it with love. You'll know you have really done something with love if you have really gone out of your way and have allowed your comfort zones to be disturbed. That quarrel you should mend, that visit you should make, that sorry you should say, that treasure you should give, that vice you should give up, that love you should express—do it now. *It's Christmas.* Give your heart. That's all that Jesus asks of you.

* * *

Our presents are signs of our love and presence. However, let us not forget that the best present is to be literally present. But what sort of a presence are you? Are you an angry presence? Are you a cold presence? Are you a cynical presence? Are you a plastic presence?

* * *

It is easy to escape real presence by being a busy presence. We become so engrossed with work and activities (all for the birthday Celebrator, *kuno*). And yet we feel drained and empty. Why? Because it was all work, function or obligation.

Again, may the Blessed Mother reminds us that we must not forget *the heart*.

* * *

This may sound morbid, but think about it: There were people who were with us last Christmas and are no longer with us this Christmas, and, there are people who are with us this Christmas who may not be with us next Christmas. It could be his or her last Christmas. It could be your last Christmas. It could be my last Christmas. Why don't you make this Christmas the best Christmas ever yet?

If at this moment God is speaking to you, harden not your heart. Do not postpone your conversion. Do not postpone your loving.

Merry Christmas Everyone. Make that a "Mary" Christmas, like Mama Mary's first Christmas, so simple, quiet, peaceful and so filled with love, hope and joy.

* * *

Remember 10-year-old blind Fatima who exudes so much hope and joy despite undergoing dialysis five times a day? I asked her what her one Christmas wish was. Her response: Even if only up to the New Year, let us have peace in our families and in the Philippines, and in the world.

She did not ask for toys or goodies. All the child wants is peace. Funny how we adults want all the goodies of this world for Christmas and we forget peace!

* * *

It is interesting to note that "Bethlehem," the place of Jesus' birth which symbolizes peace and quiet, has through contraction and corruption become "bedlam," which is a place of noise and confusion. Make sure you don't make bedlam out of Bethlehem this Christmas!

* * *

I get the feeling that for many people "Pasko" means "Pass *ako*," i.e., not for me. Confession? Pass *ako*. Gift-giving? Pass *ako*, etc. Instead of "Pass *ako*," let's all say, "*Pasok ako*," i.e., Count me in.

A Blessed Christmas to all!

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, this Christmas, remind me that more than my presents, it is my presence that matters to you and to your people. Amen.

‘Pip’ and Amin score for the Armed Forces

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

WHEN Saddam Hussein was captured while hiding in a hole in the ground near his hometown of Tikrit, the event was announced to the world by coalition administrator, Paul Bremer, declaring, "Ladies and Gentlemen, we got him! The tyrant is a prisoner."

Last Dec. 7, the 62nd anniversary of the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the Armed Forces scored its biggest victory in the war against the Abu Sayyaf by capturing the brutal and ruthless bandit leader known throughout the world as Commander Robot. No dramatic announcement similar to Bremer's, emanated from the AFP high command. But there was no question of the sense of achievement which surrounded the arrest of Ghalib Andang alias Commander Robot.

In one of the most spectacular cloak and dagger operations ever mounted by AFP intelligence and carried out to a successful conclusion, the man believed to be the architect of the raid on the Malaysian diving resort of Sipadan in March 2000, was nabbed by a combined force of Isafp operatives and army units. It is a fantastic story of greed and ambition, deception and daring, with all the ingredients thrown in for a thrilling James Bond movie. Unfortunately, at this time, not much detail can be revealed since there are other phases of the action which are still on-going.

* * *

It was only last October that Commodore Tirso "Pip" Danga was designated as chief, Intelligence Service AFP, replacing Gen. Victor Corpus who resigned his post in the wake of the Oakwood mutiny. Danga, a gung-ho Navy officer, who earlier served as operations chief (N-3) and intelligence chief (N-2) of the Philippine Navy, is a member of PMA "Makabayan" Class 1975. He learned the ropes from a master spyman, retired Brig. Gen. Roland Pattugalan, a widely respected Isafp chief during the '80s.

A native of San Pablo, Isabela, Danga is the oldest in a family of eight. His father is a retired Army enlisted man, while his mother, to help out with family expenses, took in work as a laundrywoman and when he graduated from the Academy he pitched in to see his younger siblings through school. During his early years in the Navy, he acquired the nickname "Pip" which was the monicker of Tirso Cruz III, then a teen movie idol. He was one of the first in his class to make it to star rank while serving as camp commander of Camp Aguinaldo, home of the Armed Forces in Quezon City.

As Isafp chief, he recently broke up a gang of intelligence personnel who were selling mission orders to civilians, charging them P7,500 per order. A mission order allows the bearer to carry firearms and to engage in activities not sanctioned by headquarters. In addition to selling the mission orders, the group which included an Air Force colonel and an Army captain, had been conducting seminars for the holders and charging them registration fees of P1,000.

* * *

Lt. Col. Aminkadra Undug is a member of PMA Class 1982. A native of Sulu, he is the only Muslim from his class. For a time, he was with the Special Forces Regiment of the Philippine Army until he joined the Intelligence Service. As head of Military Intelligence Group (MIG) 9, based in Mindanao, he came up with Oplan "Robotic" aimed at capturing the elusive bandit leader. Once Danga had given his imprimatur, "Robotic" was set in motion and supported by units of the 104th Brigade, the operations resulted in the Dec. 7 arrest.

* * *

For a public long frustrated and cynical about announcements from the Armed Forces concerning dragnets or cordons being thrown around escaping bandits or rebels, only to come up empty-handed, it was welcome news for a change. For a public skeptical about the use of intelligence funds by the Armed Forces, the capture of Robot provided fresh hope that with the right leadership the AFP could deliver as expected.

Yesterday, officers and men of MIG 9, along with Pip Danga, spent the evening together in a joyful Christmas celebration. Their quarry lay in a V. Luna hospital bed, minus one leg, never again to cause so much misery and pain to innocent victims of greed and cruelty.

* * *

Last Nov. 30, I mentioned that Justice Cecilia Muñoz Palma was the first woman bar topnotcher in our history. Former Sen. Victor Ziga has called my attention to the fact that it was his mother, former Sen. Tecla San Andres Ziga, who as a member of UP Law Class 1930, was the first of her sex to obtain the highest marks in the bar exams.

Tecla San Andres Ziga was also the founder and first woman president of the Women Lawyers' Association of the Philippines, the first woman representative to be re-elected to Congress and the first woman lawyer to be elected to the Philippine Senate. Setting also a record of husband-and-wife "firsts," in 1961 she served as a Cabinet member of Diosdado Macapagal, while her husband Venancio was congressman of Albay. When Mrs. Ziga was elected senator in 1963, her husband was re-elected congressman during the same period.

25 years of Jollibee

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I CAME late for the book launching of "A 25-Year Love Story with the Pinoy," a coffee-table tome published to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Jollibee Foods Corporation. I arrived just in time to catch the "photo op," in fact, missing the formal turnover of copies of the book to each of the 25 writers gathered by editor Krip Yuson, as well as the reading of excerpts from their essays by the writers present at the launch.

Which is just as well, since I would have been loath to read aloud from my piece, on "Jollibee and Family Values," since it begins with a rather mushy recollection of our courtship days in the late 1970s, when an obscure ice cream parlor in Cubao was the unlikely setting for our budding romance. By the time we got married in 1978, the ice cream parlor was gone, replaced by a fast-food joint with the then-unusual name of "Jollibee."

It's fun reading through "A 25-Year Love Story," if only to find how creative writers can get, mining Jollibee's 25-year presence in Filipino life for themes for their essays. There are brief histories of the company's remarkable growth from domestic upstart to global player, reviews of its cuisine and architecture, reflections on the bee's role in Pinoy pop culture, memoirs tied to childhoods spent in Jollibee's playgrounds, tales of Jollibee urban legends, and fearless forecasts on the future of this most successful of Pinoy enterprises. Poets Marra Pl. Lanot, Teo Antonio, Ramon C. Sunico and Vim Nadera even managed to fashion Jollibee-inspired poetry!

Indeed, as Yuson points out in his introduction, there's "extra luster" in the eyes of the prime mascot these days, and not just because of a re-design that added cut-outs to Jollibee's eyes. It could also be because the bee has gone from mere mascot to cultural icon, a part of Filipino life for a quarter of a century, a habit, a destination, by itself a reason for celebration.

* * *

EVERY Christmas of the last few years, during the David family gathering in our and my sister-in-law Belle's adjoining homes, Eligio Peralta, my husband Pie's and Belle's Tiong Totoy, would gather his nephews around him and remind them of a collective obligation. And that was, to help carry him to his final resting place. Yes, quite a morbid thought for such a festive occasion, which was why everybody, including his children and wife Viring, would shush him and tell Tiong Totoy, who by then would have probably imbibed more holiday spirits than was good for him, to turn his thoughts to far happier things.

Christmas was always a sentimental occasion for Tiong Totoy. As the annual gathering wound down, my husband and I would start bracing ourselves for Tiong Totoy's "litany": About how much he loved Pie. About how he had been Pie's primary caregiver during infancy, and how much of a crybaby Pie was. About how much he depended on Pie to ease his way into the other life, including fulfilling the obligation to help carry his casket. I often wondered how his children, especially his sons, felt about Tiong Totoy's declarations. But through all these years, I've never felt a trace of resentment or jealousy. The ties between our two families, after all, are stronger than even fleeting ill feelings.

There are ties of blood and romance. Tiong Totoy and Tiang Vi met as grade schoolers in my in-laws' household, he being my mother-in-law's nephew and she being my father-in-law's youngest sister. There are those who claim that the minute Tiong Totoy espied Tiang Vi, he fell heedlessly in love. But when they eloped in their teens, such was my father-in-law's wrath that he reportedly waited up for them for days with a revolver in his hand.

And there are ties of time and caring. When the young couple finally reconciled with the older Davids, they and their family were never more than a few houses away. They lived just behind the David home in Mandaluyong, and indeed are looked on by my husband and his siblings as second parents. And when I moved into this home early in our marriage, Tiang Vi became a surrogate *lola*, looking after my son Piepie and Belle's son Marty whenever we lost the services of a *yaya*.

* * *

YESTERDAY, my husband finally fulfilled his promise to Tiong Totoy, helping carry his casket to his gravesite in a quiet valley deep in the Antipolo hills.

At the services prior to the burial, Tiong Totoy's eldest child Lucien cited his father's record as a public servant, having served for many years in the council of Barangay San Isidro in Cainta. This was how Tiong Totoy filled his time in his last years, serving in the *"lupong pamayapa"* or barangay justice court, and joining in the activities of the "seniors club."

So often is the term "public servant" attached to the names of men and women in politics, many of whom had in fact betrayed their calling and were in it only for money and power, that the term has lost all meaning. Maybe Tiong Totoy's example will restore some of its luster. For isn't this what being a "servant" is—to serve without thought of honor, fame or remuneration? It's the "little people" like him, who serve their communities out of sheer desire to serve and live a meaningful life, who still keep me believing in the existence of true "public servants" out there.

Here then, is a fond farewell to Tiong Totoy, Mang Eli Peralta to his neighbors and friends, who true to this sentimental nature had declared at our anniversary party just the other week that it was probably the last time we would all be together. That isn't entirely true, for we are pushing through with our Christmas gathering this year. And though he won't be around to wax sentimental, his memory will surely be evoked. And to his wife Tiang Vi, his nine children and their spouses, and his grandchildren, Tiong Totoy will be a presence difficult to forget, fondly remembered.

Faith in new beginnings

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

CONSIDERING how almost every major event in our nation's political life since 1972 has led to more problems, we may wonder why we hope that another presidential election might produce anything different. The answer lies, I think, in our people's inexhaustible faith in new beginnings. It is our most important source of strength. We may be fatalistic in the sense that we believe in fate, but pessimism has never been part of our culture.

Faith in new beginnings is what sustains more than eight million of our people who must live and work in unfamiliar settings, away from their loved ones. They are not afraid of what the future will bring, nor are they ever unsure if they can keep their promise to return, because of this faith. So long as they do not harm others and so long as they live by honest means, they know that no injury will befall them. We do not retreat from the uncertainty of new encounters; we plunge into the unknown with the boldness of *"Bahala na."* We pick our way through the minefield of many cultures with the confidence of one who has known the map of the human soul.

It is also this faith that gives us the capacity to forgive and to make promises. We are not a vengeful people. Of the rare deeds we cannot forgive, we usually say, *"Diyos na ang bahala* (God will take care of them)." The Last Judgment is not a power we ascribe to ourselves. We are the characters in Hannah Arendt's world, for whom forgiving and dismissing are necessary "in order to make it possible for life to go on by constantly releasing men from what they have done unknowingly."

I bring up these thoughts in relation to President Macapagal-Arroyo's recent proposal for a general amnesty in the spirit of reconciliation and healing. There is enough soil in our culture in which to nurture such a proposal. Forgiveness is not alien to us. But forgiveness is an unusual concept in political and legal theory, where the central concept is justice, and the punishment, retribution and reparation it entails. So long as we cannot get away from the language of the law, like those who have warned the President of a possible violation of the Constitution, it would be difficult to break the cycle of vengeance and retribution.

The flaw in Ms Macapagal's initiative is its timing. It is occurring at the end of her term rather than at the beginning, and it is being communicated not as the closing act of a magnanimous government, but as a calculated move to win re-election. In her hands, the offer of forgiveness acquires a sinister quality. It is greeted with cynicism rather than awe.

But, were it not for this, Christmas would indeed be a perfect time for forgiveness. "The discoverer of the role of forgiveness in the realm of human affairs was Jesus of Nazareth," Arendt reminds us. More than the power to perform miracles, it was Jesus' claim to the power of forgiveness that amazed the people around him. He claimed this power not as God but as man. "Man in the gospel is not supposed to forgive because God forgives and he must do 'likewise,' but 'if ye from your hearts forgive,' God shall do 'likewise'." Truly, this is, as Arendt sees it, a radical formulation.

In Christianity, the duty to forgive resides in the belief that human beings know not what they do. Arendt gives this philosophy a secular spin by situating it within her notion of the irreversibility and unpredictability of the process of human action. We cannot undo things; the cure available is forgiveness. Nor can we predict the future, and so we create spaces for certainty by making and keeping promises. This, Arendt says, is the condition of human relationships.

"Without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we could never recover; we would remain the victims of its consequences forever.... Without being bound to the fulfillment of promises, we would never be able to keep our identities; we would be condemned to wander helplessly and without direction in the darkness of each man's lonely heart—a darkness which only the light shed over the public realm through the presence of others, who confirm the identity between the one who promises and the one who fulfills, can dispel."

It has been 17 years since we filed the cases against Ferdinand Marcos and his associates. The process has yielded some money and properties, declared to be ill-gotten, for the national treasury. But as far as I know, none of these cases has established anything conclusive about the guilt or innocence of Marcos, his cronies or his key military officials. No one has been punished, except the military underlings who were convicted for the murder of Ninoy Aquino. It's also been almost three years since Joseph Estrada was removed from office and charged with plunder. What he did pales in comparison with the Marcos crimes. He is detained, awaiting the conclusion of his trial, which may never come.

We have not punished, and neither have we forgiven. Maybe, Arendt was right: "Men are unable to forgive what they cannot punish and they are unable to punish what has turned out to be unforgivable." The latter go beyond the realm of human affairs. They belong to the category of "radical evil," about which little is known. The Holocaust might be an example. But I do not know of any comparable crime in our nation's history that we cannot forgive.

"A child has been born unto us." That is always a new beginning.

Merry Christmas, dear readers and friends!

* * *

Comments to randolf@pacific.net.ph

Presidential aspirants

COMMENTARY

Raul J. Palabrica

AS of this writing, 20 Filipinos have formally expressed their intention to run for the highest office in the land in the May 2004 elections. The number is expected to rise before the period for the filing of certificates of candidacy ends on Jan. 5, 2004.

In the 1998 presidential polls, 78 people made a similar move. But only 11 of them were allowed by the Commission on Elections to pursue their ambition. The rest were found to be lacking in the resources needed to make a decent run for the presidency so they were dropped from the list of candidates.

The record for the most number of attempts to become president belongs to Pascual Racuyal. A mechanic by profession, his efforts started in the Commonwealth period, when he first ran against Manuel Quezon, and ended in the 1969 polls where President Ferdinand Marcos won his reelection bid. Nothing was heard from Racuyal after martial law was imposed in 1972. After 40 long years, he probably realized the futility of his dream.

The present batch of presidential aspirants consists of, among others, a woman who claims to be the fiancée of US President George Bush, a jobless person, a self-proclaimed "messiah" and a lawyer who promised to give US visas to all Filipinos within the first 100 days of his administration.

From the looks of it, the early birds appear to meet the qualifications laid down by the Constitution on who can become president, namely, a natural-born citizen, a registered voter, able to read and write, at least 40 years old and a resident of the Philippines for at least 10 years immediately preceding the election.

Qualifications

This provision, which was copied from the US Constitution, is based on the principle that in a democracy every citizen, regardless of creed, gender or station on life, has the right to seek the leadership of his country.

The presidential aspirant is not required to have reached a certain level of education, or earned material wealth, or have experience in public governance. It is enough that he or she meets the minimum requirements of citizenship, age, literacy and residency to be allowed to seek the people's mandate to steer the country's destiny for six years.

It is up to the electorate to decide if they want to entrust their lives and that of their children and grandchildren to somebody who meets only the barest of qualifications for the position or demand that he or she offer something more in terms of education, training and experience. After all, isn't the voice of the people supposed to be the voice of God?

The framers of the Constitution probably assumed that this provision would be taken seriously by those interested in running for the presidency. That only the truly fit and qualified, not people who have nothing better to do, would consider the idea of aspiring to become the country's Numero Uno.

Ironically, while the Constitution is liberal in its determination on who can be president, it imposed strict qualification rules on who may hold other important, although lesser in rank, positions in government.

Appointment to the Supreme Court requires at least 15 years experience as judge of a lower court or in the practice of law in the Philippines. Majority of the members of the Comelec should be lawyers who have engaged in the practice of law for at least 10 years. The members of the Commission on Audit have to be certified public accountants with no less than 10 years of auditing experience or law practice.

Experience

The rationale behind the work experience requirement is simple. It is aimed at ensuring that the people who hold these important positions possess the skills needed to properly and efficiently accomplish the mandate of their offices.

Working under the same principle, the laws that created the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Land Bank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines and other government-owned financing institutions have reserved their top posts to people with extensive banking or financial management experience. For obvious reasons, billions of pesos of the people's money cannot be entrusted to the care of people with less than impeccable credentials in the financial world.

Collectively, the duties and responsibilities of these officials pale in comparison to those placed by the Constitution and existing laws on the shoulders of the president. An error of judgment on his or her part could adversely affect the national economy. A decision taken without proper consultations with the right parties could wreak havoc on the livelihood of millions of Filipinos. An action taken in a fit of anger or pique could pit members of the society against each other with disastrous consequences.

In this highly centralized government, where all major social, political and economic decisions emanate from Malacañang, the country catches a cold, figuratively speaking, whenever the president sneezes.

Responsibility

This is why the choice of the president who will take over the helm of government for the next six years is critical. The country can suffer the clowns in the House of Representatives and nincompoops in the Senate, but not an incompetent or corrupt president.

The presidency requires more than the minimum qualifications provided for in the Constitution. Citizenship, age, literacy and residency alone are insufficient to justify the election of a person to the highest office in the land. The job of running the country calls for certain talents and skills that not every candidate has the fortune of being endowed with. Facetious as it may sound, the incoming president should have the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job and the compassion of Blessed Mother Teresa in order to succeed.

At this point, some thoughts are worth pondering.

In the three years that President Macapagal-Arroyo has been in power, has there been a marked improvement in the living conditions of the majority of our people to justify her stay in Malacañang for six more years?

Is Raul Roco's platform of HOPE the answer to the problem of grinding poverty, poor quality of education and other social and economic problems that have stunted the growth of our country?

Will Sen. Panfilo Lacson's program of justice and law and order restore the people's confidence in the government and attract the investments needed to reduce the country's unemployment problem?

Sorry, but nothing can be asked about Fernando Poe Jr. because he has not yet firmed up his platform.

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TALK of the TOWN

Please send feedback to
jsarmiento@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

What's your Christmas wish?

THE CHRISTMAS season is a time for gift giving. It's no longer gold, frankincense and myrrh that the Three Wise Men from the East presented to the infant born in a manger in Bethlehem more than two millennia ago. Because almost everything now is commercialized, the gifts of the modern "magi" are bought at the *tiangge*, at malls or even on the Internet. Seldom does one make the presents for his kith and kin.

Because of technology, greeting a friend or a loved one in another province, city or time zone has also changed. It used to be done by sending Christmas cards or by placing a call. Now, it can be done through texting, or by sending e-mail. The delivery system has changed but the idea of warming one's heart has remained the same.

The Yuletide season is also a time for hope. It's a time for wishing that something better would come one's way. What one wishes for is oftentimes a function of his or her station in life. For the unemployed Filipinos, who are in the millions, their wish is to find work or the means to support themselves. The wish of Rica Plaza, who was left by her husband, is to have a small capital so she could start a business and support her eight children. For a country officer of a multinational bank, it is to lose weight so he can drive his dream sports car.

There are wishes that are common to Filipinos of different social classes, though. These are peace and happiness.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Happiness

I wish for the happiness of the people I love. If people should wish for the happiness of others, think of what the world can become—a world full of giving where dreams can be a reality, where people think of the welfare of others. Far from reality? Well, it's a wish, it might just happen. *Erico Lopez, human resource consultant*

For my family to be happy on Christmas. That's my only wish. *Roldan Bacacao, construction worker*

The true essence of Christmas is making everyone smile. This Christmas, I wish I could make everyone smile through my simple way of celebrating the Yuletide Season. I believe that some joys are better expressed in silence like a smile, which holds more meaning than laughter. I wish also that others can touch lives by sharing what they have even though it's not a material thing. *Alvin Baquiran, student*

I wish I could find happiness and peace of mind because I'm going through a difficult period. I wish for a boyfriend so my Christmas will not be so cold. *Shella Mendoza, BS hotel and restaurant management student*

Christmas is a time to be happy, and people define happiness in different ways, in different degrees, in different things. I have always wished that my family would be happy, and that is enough to make me happy. It's one gift that I have always wished for—happiness in the eyes of my loved ones. *Erico Roy Lopez, consultant*

To make my Daddy happier. That has been my constant wish since he suffered a stroke when I was in high school. I know what to tell people when they ask me my wish every year. *Alysza, media producer*

Holiday with family

My Christmas wish is to have a restful holiday with my family. It has been awhile since we have been together with our two children who are studying in the United States. Because of my hectic schedule when I was in government, I missed out on these simple pleasures. I am hoping to be with my family in mind and body for a change. (Camacho left with his family for the United States on Wednesday to join two daughters studying in Harvard. The investment banker joined the Macapagal administration in March 2001, and left last month because of emotional, physical, and financial exhaustion.) *Former Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho*

To be able to spend my Christmas with my father who is working abroad. I want to go to Mass on Christmas Day with both my mother and my father. I also want to experience giving them Christmas gifts that I would buy with my own money. *Luzviminda Rodenette Diaz, psychology student*

I wish my parents could come to Manila so we could be together on Christmas and New Year. They are in Samar and I haven't seen them for a long time. *Rex Baltazar, janitor*

To be with my husband and child on Christmas. They are in Bicutan. I hope that my job as a pedicab driver will continue so that I could earn for our daily needs. *Pamela Soto, pedicab driver*

Peace

I wish for peace, unity and stability in the Philippines. That we may go into the right direction because we're in a situation in which we don't know where we came from and where we're going. We're in a state of confusion. *Edd Fuentes, president, Fuentes Publicity Network, Inc.*

I wish to have a worry-free Christmas and a guilt-free New Year because I've been dealing with worries and guilt feelings for as long as I can remember. Just an assurance, please, I'm not doomed to have this baggage forever. Besides, shouldn't Christmas be all about peace and happiness? *Kristine Martinez, BS comparative literature student*

For peace to reign in the country so that crimes such as kidnapping would stop. For my family, I wish to see my older brother who has been away for 12 years. I also hope that next year my wish to settle down and start my own family will come true. *Elsa Angeles, secretary*

I wish for peace and unity of the Filipino people. May we all be intelligent and conscientious enough to vote for the right person who will manage our country. *Allan Nieves, district agronomist*

Lotto

I wish to win in the lottery and help my friend in building his house, and to own a Toyota Hi-Ace. I also wish for my family to be in good health. I wish for other people to be happy and all other families to celebrate Christmas peacefully. *Cesar As-il, driver*

I consider Christmas a time for family and friends, a time for lightheadedness and bliss. When I think of this, though, I can't help but feel saddened by the fact that, sometimes, the most cherished relationships are broken due to narrow-minded people, leading to misunderstanding. I wish for reconciliation not only toward others but also to one's self. I also want to win the lotto. *Chris Almirañez, analyst*

To win the lotto. Then after winning, I will help the poor and needy. *Pam Muñoz, banker*

Health

I wish for more physical strength so I could continue working and that there will be work available. At my age, 72, I should not be working anymore but no one is helping me so I have to continue working. My wife is unemployed and my children have their own families but they are also hard up financially. If only I could earn more money, I will give them some because it makes me happy helping them out. *Pedro Apostol, carpenter*

Health, wealth and love for all those I care for. It is a little embarrassing to wish for something for myself when the people around me are having their own problems. But still, we face those problems together and that's why my wish is for all. *Joni Lisa Esubil, college student*

I wish my wife and I would still live longer and be healthy. I am now 80. *Agustin Valdez, farmer*

A kidney transplant operation for my brother Larry so he can guide his daughter and wife. That's the greatest gift and wish I want right now to make myself and my family the happiest this Christmas. *Gerald Guzman, duty-free shop worker*

Pair of shoes, new clothes

A new pair of shoes, because the only pair I have now I've been using for five years already. And also for a new pair of pants and shirts because most what I have are hand-me-downs. *John Paul Cazcarro, unemployed*

I wish my five children would have new clothes, shoes and plenty of food during Christmas. I know that they will be very happy when we share *noche buena*. I want them to at least have a day of plenty out of the 365 days in a year. *Myrna Eugenio, newspaper vendor*

I hope I can have things for the baby I will give birth to in the first week of January. All my children are grown up and this is an unexpected pregnancy. *Salvacion Javier, jobless*

Noche buena to cheer up my children on Christmas. *Robito Eutor, carpenter*

To be rich so I can buy all I need. *Noel Caparros, unemployed*

I wish there would be more rich people who would have a kind heart to extend help to the poor who are in need, sick and most especially the orphans. I believe that the help extended to them will somehow ease their pain and sadness. For all we know these are the people who may never experience abundance in life. *Jay Erastain, bookkeeper*

A job, capital

A job I would enjoy doing, which would give me a salary and benefits. *Annie Dilag, unemployed*

I wish to get a job or start my own business next year so I can help my parents and gain their trust and respect. *Kats de los Reyes, unemployed*

Capital to start up my own business so I can support my eight children. *Rica Plaza, jobless (left by husband)*

To have capital because my husband doesn't have a regular job. *Janet Banatao, housewife*

Small capital for a business so I can send all my children to school. *Edith Fetalvero, housewife*

A side car so I could earn and feed my family. *Larry Pilarte*

I wish (my employer) would give us our bonus. *Edwin Salay, construction worker*

Computer, bike, P1 million

I wish that Santa Claus would give me a computer. It will help me earn additional income by accepting computer-related work during my spare time. I will give the money to my parents so that they can buy the things that are important to our daily lives. *Pia Marie Diaz, service contract worker*

To have a bike, so I could travel. *Marvic Angeles, grade school student*

P1 million, so I can buy peace on earth. That's a desperate joke. *Lai Grutas, teacher*

Simple joys

I wish I could feel Christmas the way it used to be when I was a child, simply because I miss the feeling. I miss the simple joys that one experiences when still a kid, like believing in Santa Clause and going to *ninongs* and *ninangs* to ask for *aguinaldo*. *Michael Errol Aricheta, computer science graduating student*

I wish people were more grateful for what they have. That way we'd have a lot less to wish for. *Jeosara Jose, brand assistant*

I have a very simple Christmas wish: While I am on vacation, I wish that I would not get any calls that are work-related. Seldom do I get any rest from work, so please, spare me all the troubles in the office while I am planning to pamper myself. *Zarah Garcia, strategist, Sikatuna Village, Quezon City*

Weight loss, peaceful polls

My Christmas wish is to lose 100 pounds in 2004 ... but seriously, I wish for a peaceful and orderly elections with the electorate voting wisely. (Cruz weighs more than 300 lbs. and he wants to lose weight so he can finally fit into his dream sports car. He says the preoccupation with the presidential election has adversely affected the financial markets.) *Eric Cruz, managing director and chief country officer of Deutsche Bank*

I wish we could have an honest, sincere, intelligent (not only able to read and write), strict but reasonable and God-fearing President and members of Congress. *Angelo C. de Alban, law student*

Prosperity

I wish that the prosperity of Ilocos Sur in particular and the whole country in general would continue. I wish for a better future for our children and the next generations to come. *Former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis Chavit Singson, presidential adviser for Northern Luzon growth area*

My wish is for Nueva Ecija, and if possible all the other provinces of our country, to become more progressive so that everyone can live more decently. It follows that if the provinces are progressive and the people are living a more decent life, we will have a better Philippines. *Tomas Joson III, governor of Nueva Ecija*

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Tel. No. (052) 820-8402
Fax No. (052) 820-1274
E-mail: inq_bicol@inquirer.com.ph

Across the NATION
E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

VISAYAS BUREAU
c/o Cebu Daily News
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Luzon cops get big role vs kidnaps

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

WORRIES over kidnappings and other high-profile crimes brought a group of Japanese businessmen over to a meeting with anti-kidnapping czar Angelo Reyes. Reyes and Toyota Motors executive vice president Dr. David Go meet at the Sta. Rosa Technopark in Laguna with other foreign investors on measures being taken by the government to stop kidnappings *(See story on Page A2)*. PHOTO FROM NAKTF

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Police and military commanders and local government officials in Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog and Metro Manila on Thursday agreed to "fuse intelligence and operations" in the fight against kidnapping.

Chief Supt. Vidal Querol, Central Luzon police chief, said the new system was adopted in a meeting presided over by President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang *(See related story on Page A2)*.

"We are going to acquire with precision the targets," Querol said of the aim of the new system. He declined to give further details on how it works.

He said the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force, led by former Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, is supervising the entire campaign.

Querol said the President's directive was for the police, military and local governments to "bond together, work together against a common threat."

He said Ms Macapagal stressed the need to unify and sustain the efforts because kidnap-for-ransom groups were "like germs that mutate."

Reyes had said 14 "most wanted men" were added to the Naktf's list of suspected kidnap gang leaders. Authorities reported either killing or arresting three suspects in the list. They were identified as Dr. Roberto Obeles Yap, Allan Niegas and Vilmor Catamco.

Yap and three of his men were killed in an encounter with Central Luzon policemen in Dinalupihan, Bataan, on Nov. 20. The Obeles-Yap group is said to be the "most notorious" kidnap-for-ransom group in the country and was suspected to be behind the abduction of six people, mostly Filipino-Chinese this year.

Reyes earlier said the anti-kidnapping efforts were being expanded from Metro Manila to Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog, the regions nearest the metropolis.

"We are an ancillary operational support area," Querol said to dispel reports that Central Luzon is a base of kidnap syndicates.

On Nov. 22, policemen in Nueva Ecija reported the arrest of "suspected remnants" of Yap's group. They were identified as Rowel Corpus, Zaldy Magdao, Carina Garcia, Nina Cabatingan and Girlie Corpus. They were released after posting bail.

On Nov. 21, charges of murder, multiple physical injuries and illegal possession of firearms were filed against two suspected members of Yap's group who survived the clash with lawmen.

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Garbage dump tagged blessing in disguise

BAGUIO CITY—A garbage dump in Bontoc, Mt. Province, which had been polluting the Chico River, has benefited Kalinga rice fields with potent organic fertilizer, the Department of Agriculture said here on Friday.

But Bontoc residents are asking the local government for funds to relocate and rationalize its sold waste management system.

Students and members of women's groups in Bontoc launched a clean-up drive along the banks of the Chico River where the government had been dumping its trash for decades.

Faustino Maslan, Cordillera director of the Department of Agriculture, said Kalinga's abundant rice yield this year could be accounted for by the high density of "festigation," or the increased organic elements mixed with the natural irrigation water that feeds these farms.

Bontoc's organic debris had been contributing immense dosages of organic fertilizer to Chico River, Maslan said. The debris supplemented the high volcanic nature of soil in Kalinga.

The province produced 51,146 metric tons of rice in July, according to the National Statistics Coordination Board.

"But Bontoc's pollution has entered the 21st century. It was okay if they were dealing with festering vegetables or dead matter, but this time the Chico River is dealing with non-biodegradable waste like plastic bags, discarded tin cans and even Styrofoam packs," said Lyn Madalang, executive director of the Baguio-based Ebgan, Inc., which spearheaded the campaign.

Madalang said the Bontoc government was not receptive to the clean-up drive when it was launched on Sept. 16, the capital town's anniversary.

Students from Mt. Province and Kalinga were joined by members of non-government organizations, housewives and Baguio artists in picking up garbage strewn on riverbanks.

But the town government last week offered to have a dialogue with the group to help introduce long-term technologies to its outdated solid waste management program, Madalang said.

The government also commended the group's clean-up drive.

Romeo Concio, incoming Baguio environment officer, who facilitated the construction of new composting and recycling technology at the city's dumpsite, also offered to share the technology with the town, Madalang said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Anti-smuggling campaign shifts focus to Mindanao

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The Anti-Smuggling Intelligence and Investigation Center (ASIIC) has shifted its focus to the port here to thwart efforts by smugglers looking for alternative points for their illegal activities.

Lt. Col. Rodolfo Santiago, ASIIC investigation and operations chief, told the INQUIRER that they were expecting smugglers to use alternative entry points after encountering difficulties in Luzon and Visayas.

Santiago said authorities have already successfully implemented tighter measures in ports outside Mindanao resulting in the reduction of smuggling there.

Santiago said ASIIC has enlisted the help of the police, the military and other agencies in the fight against the expected surge of illegal importation through the port here.

He said they already provided them seminars on the basics of smuggling like procedures and importation laws.

Lawyer Lourdes Mangaoang, customs district collector here, told the INQUIRER that the opening of the ASIIC office and the seminar would boost the government's anti-smuggling drive.

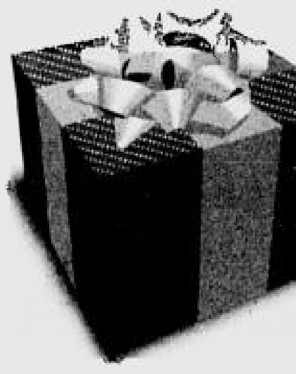
Virgilio Antonio, representative of the Federation of Philippine Industries, Inc., said laws alone were not sufficient to solve the country's problem on smuggling.

He said the solution to the problem lies in the strict implementation of the laws.

Antonio provided illustrations on how legitimate industries were being killed by smugglers.

He said the local resin industry alone has been losing about P1.9 billion each year because of the illegal entry of 50,000 metric tons of smuggled resins.

The government, he said, loses P370 million in taxes per year because of this. *Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*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Pioneer Highlands - Madison

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Makati Cinema Square

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Quezon Ave. - Lucena
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Gorordo - Cebu City
North - Mandaue
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Goldenfield - Bacolod

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Lapasan - Cagayan de Oro
Santiago St. - General Santos
Sta. Ana - Davao City

BRANCHES OPEN ON JANUARY 2, 2004

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Sixto Antonio - Pasig

WESTERN METRO
C. Palanca - Quiapo
M. de Santos - Ilaya

CENTRAL METRO
Ortigas Avenue - Greenhills
Robinson's Galleria - Ortigas

SOUTHERN METRO
NAIA 1
Manuela Metropolis - Alabang
Redemptorist Road - Baclaran

MAKATI
MC Home Depot - Fort Bonifacio

NORTHERN LUZON
Alexander - Urdaneta
Castro - Laoag
Cauayan - Isabela
Perez - Dagupan City
Session Road - Baguio

CENTRAL LUZON
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Luzon cops get big role vs kidnaps

WORRIES over kidnappings and other high-profile crimes brought a group of Japanese businessmen over to a meeting with anti-kidnapping czar Angelo Reyes. Reyes and Toyota Motors executive vice president Dr. David Go meet at the Sta. Rosa Technopark in Laguna with other foreign investors on measures being taken by the government to stop kidnappings *(See story on Page A2)*. PHOTO FROM NAKTF

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Police and military commanders and local government officials in Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog and Metro Manila on Thursday agreed to "fuse intelligence and operations" in the fight against kidnapping.

Chief Supt. Vidal Querol, Central Luzon police chief, said the new system was adopted in a meeting presided over by President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang *(See related story on Page A2)*.

"We are going to acquire with precision the targets," Querol said of the aim of the new system. He declined to give further details on how it works.

He said the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force, led by former Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, is supervising the entire campaign.

Querol said the President's directive was for the police, military and local governments to "bond together, work together against a common threat."

He said Ms Macapagal stressed the need to unify and sustain the efforts because kidnap-for-ransom groups were "like germs that mutate."

Reyes had said 14 "most wanted men" were added to the Naktf's list of suspected kidnap gang leaders. Authorities reported either killing or arresting three suspects in the list. They were identified as Dr. Roberto Obeles Yap, Allan Niegas and Vilmor Catamco.

Yap and three of his men were killed in an encounter with Central Luzon policemen in Dinalupihan, Bataan, on Nov. 20. The Obeles-Yap group is said to be the "most notorious" kidnap-for-ransom group in the country and was suspected to be behind the abduction of six people, mostly Filipino-Chinese this year.

Reyes earlier said the anti-kidnapping efforts were being expanded from Metro Manila to Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog, the regions nearest the metropolis.

"We are an ancillary operational support area," Querol said to dispel reports that Central Luzon is a base of kidnap syndicates.

On Nov. 22, policemen in Nueva Ecija reported the arrest of "suspected remnants" of Yap's group. They were identified as Rowel Corpus, Zaldy Magdao, Carina Garcia, Nina Cabatingan and Girlie Corpus. They were released after posting bail.

On Nov. 21, charges of murder, multiple physical injuries and illegal possession of firearms were filed against two suspected members of Yap's group who survived the clash with lawmen.

Garbage dump tagged blessing in disguise

BAGUIO CITY—A garbage dump in Bontoc, Mt. Province, which had been polluting the Chico River, has benefited Kalinga rice fields with potent organic fertilizer, the Department of Agriculture said here on Friday.

But Bontoc residents are asking the local government for funds to relocate and rationalize its sold waste management system.

Students and members of women's groups in Bontoc launched a clean-up drive along the banks of the Chico River where the government had been dumping its trash for decades.

Faustino Maslan, Cordillera director of the Department of Agriculture, said Kalinga's abundant rice yield this year could be accounted for by the high density of "festigation," or the increased organic elements mixed with the natural irrigation water that feeds these farms.

Bontoc's organic debris had been contributing immense dosages of organic fertilizer to Chico River, Maslan said. The debris supplemented the high volcanic nature of soil in Kalinga.

The province produced 51,146 metric tons of rice in July, according to the National Statistics Coordination Board.

"But Bontoc's pollution has entered the 21st century. It was okay if they were dealing with festering vegetables or dead matter, but this time the Chico River is dealing with non-biodegradable waste like plastic bags, discarded tin cans and even Styrofoam packs," said Lyn Madalang, executive director of the Baguio-based Ebgan, Inc., which spearheaded the campaign.

Madalang said the Bontoc government was not receptive to the clean-up drive when it was launched on Sept. 16, the capital town's anniversary.

Students from Mt. Province and Kalinga were joined by members of non-government organizations, housewives and Baguio artists in picking up garbage strewn on riverbanks.

But the town government last week offered to have a dialogue with the group to help introduce long-term technologies to its outdated solid waste management program, Madalang said.

The government also commended the group's clean-up drive.

Romeo Concio, incoming Baguio environment officer, who facilitated the construction of new composting and recycling technology at the city's dumpsite, also offered to share the technology with the town, Madalang said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Anti-smuggling campaign shifts focus to Mindanao

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The Anti-Smuggling Intelligence and Investigation Center (ASIIC) has shifted its focus to the port here to thwart efforts by smugglers looking for alternative points for their illegal activities.

Lt. Col. Rodolfo Santiago, ASIIC investigation and operations chief, told the INQUIRER that they were expecting smugglers to use alternative entry points after encountering difficulties in Luzon and Visayas.

Santiago said authorities have already successfully implemented tighter measures in ports outside Mindanao resulting in the reduction of smuggling there.

Santiago said ASIIC has enlisted the help of the police, the military and other agencies in the fight against the expected surge of illegal importation through the port here.

He said they already provided them seminars on the basics of smuggling like procedures and importation laws.

Lawyer Lourdes Mangaoang, customs district collector here, told the INQUIRER that the opening of the ASIIC office and the seminar would boost the government's anti-smuggling drive.

Virgilio Antonio, representative of the Federation of Philippine Industries, Inc., said laws alone were not sufficient to solve the country's problem on smuggling.

He said the solution to the problem lies in the strict implementation of the laws.

Antonio provided illustrations on how legitimate industries were being killed by smugglers.

He said the local resin industry alone has been losing about P1.9 billion each year because of the illegal entry of 50,000 metric tons of smuggled resins.

The government, he said, loses P370 million in taxes per year because of this. *Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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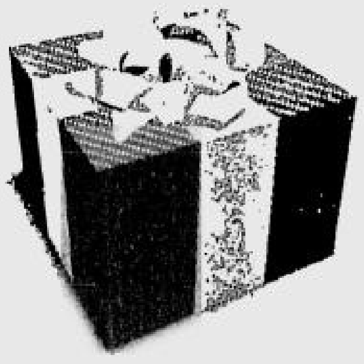

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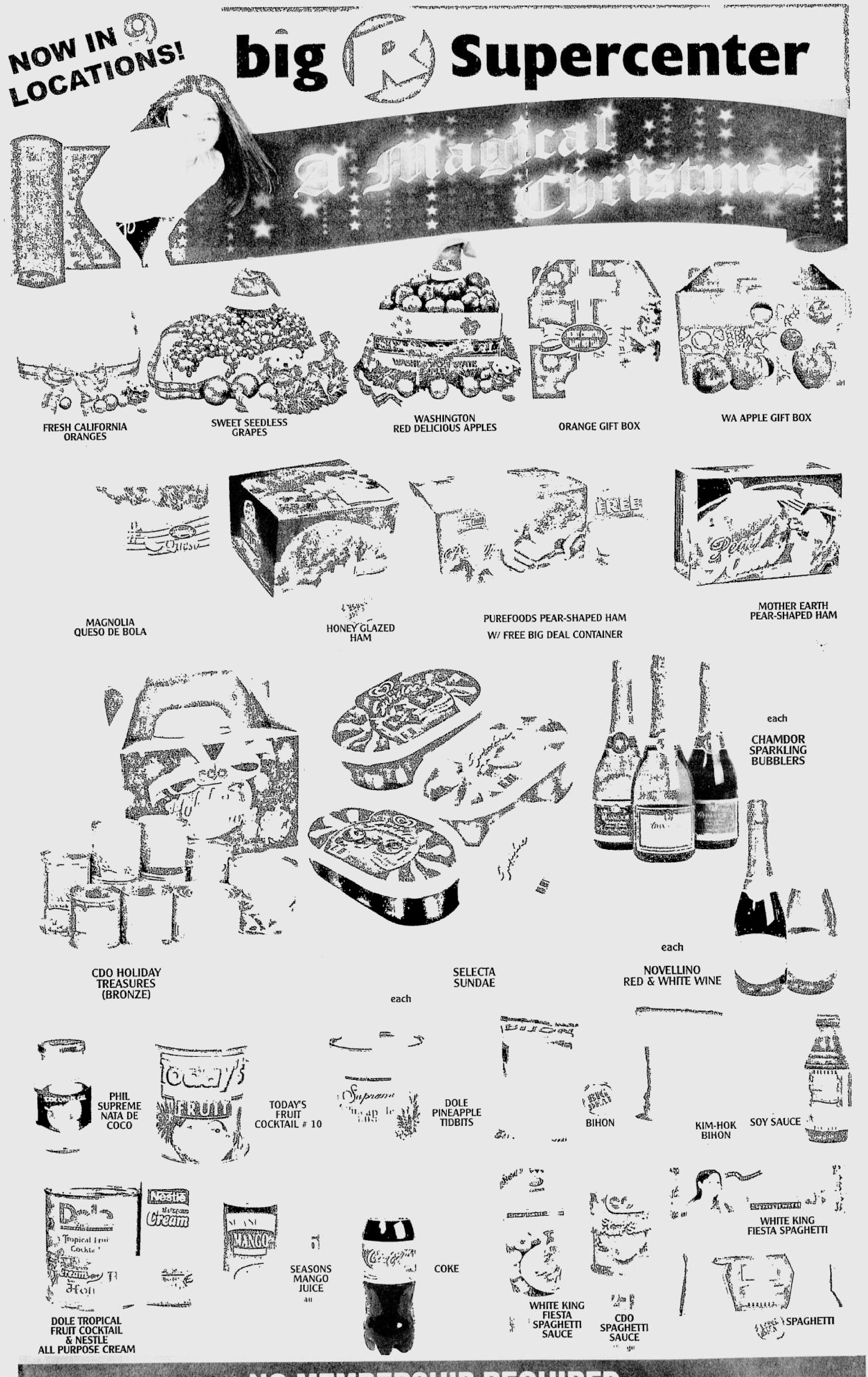

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EXODUS

DENNIS JAY SANTOS/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Some 5,000 members of tribal communities from remote parts of Southern Mindanao flock to Davao City hoping to earn loose change for the holidays. The exodus forced the city government to find a temporary shelter for the tribes people.

RIGHTS GROUP REPORT

Villagers' hardships blamed on NPA, Army

By Anthony S. Allada
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—Human rights group Karapatan said it was holding both the New People's Army (NPA) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) responsible for the violence that displaced close to 100 residents of Pantukan, Compostela Valley about two weeks ago.

Two soldiers and a civilian were killed when NPA rebels stormed a neighborhood in Barangay Kingking there on Dec. 8.

Mission

Karapatan said during a combined medical, relief and fact-finding mission it launched in the area, together with representatives from the Children's Rehabilitation Center (CRC), Promotion for Church People's Response Foundation, Inc., and Urban Integrated Health Services Foundation Inc. (UIHSFI), they found that both the military and the NPA violated the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Laws.

The government and the National Democratic Front (NDF) signed the agreement during peace talks last year.

Ariel Casilao, Karapatan secretary general, said residents of Purok Kaymito in Sitio Lawaan told them that an undetermined number of NPA rebels on board two cargo vehicles suddenly arrived and fired at sergeants Nasser Jalain and Nestor Limbago, who were outside the house of Andres Gardiana.

Gardiana was sleeping inside his house and was killed by stray bullets.

Casilao said after the attack, the rebels also set fire to 16 houses.

"Although the target was clear to the NPAs, they failed to size up the condition of the houses, how these are situated and how close these are to each other," Casilao said.

He said the NPA "lacked foresight" considering that their targets were within the radius of a civilian populace.

"For this, the NPA committed violations," he said. The NPA, he added, violated a provision in the agreement that says civilians should be distinguished from combatants and "shall not be the object of attack."

Apology

The NPA's Merardo Arce Command earlier apologized for the attack and admitted its guerrillas erred in calculating the targets.

In blaming the military, Casilao said the attack could have not been carried out if forces of the Army's Re-engineered Special Operations Team (RSOT) did not come to the neighborhood.

Mindanao's 1st dialysis center opens

DAVAO CITY—Patients with kidney problems no longer have to travel to hospitals in Metro Manila just to undergo expensive hemodialysis treatment.

With the opening on Monday of the Mindanao Dialysis Center (MDC) at the government-run Davao Medical Center (DMC) here, patients with kidney ailments can now avail of its state-of-the-art hemodialysis facility with a low service fee of P500.

DMC chief Gerardo Cunanan told the INQUIRER that patients will also have the luxury of experiencing "A1" facilities that include 20 new and modern Fresenius hemodialysis machines, and sofas and TV sets while undergoing treatment.

Such treatment in other private hospitals will cost a patient some P2,000 or as high as P5,000.

Cunanan said even the poor can avail of the low prices, provided that they are enrolled to the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation.

"It's very comfortable and they pay very little amount," Cunanan said of the their newest facility, considered to be the first in Mindanao.

DMC's Dr. Melvi Villanueva-Tay said with the new facility, they will be able to handle 60 patients per day.

The MDC is a special project of the DMC, the Department of Health and the Fresenius Medical Care Philippines Inc. *Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Senator-ad models blamed for high medicine costs

BAGUIO CITY—Senators, who have become endorsers of a vitamin brand, appeared to validate a revelation that influential business lobbyists control many of Congress' business legislation, the government's chief economist said.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri, director general of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), told reporters here on Monday that these lawmakers have not helped push reforms in the country's drug laws to reduce the retail prices of medicines.

Neri had accused Congress of stalling the passage of vital tax reform measures, such as the indexation of sin taxes, due to the powerful lobby from alcohol and tobacco business interests.

He said Congress must enact a law that will restrict politicians from receiving campaign contributions from businessmen.

Neri complained about two senators who have not aggressively backed several government proposals to regulate pharmaceutical production and the distribution of medicines in the country.

He said the two senators' advertising "sidelines" should have been investigated.

He said the government ended up relying on a radical importation program developed by former Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II. Roxas bought medicines from India for a parallel retail program to deliver cheap medicines to government hospitals.

Sen. Juan Flavier said one of his pending measures is a comprehensive bill to reduce medicine costs. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Monument in Batangas town stirs controversy, scandal

SAN JOSE, Batangas—This town, known as the egg basket of Luzon, doesn't have any landmark that represents its products. Instead, the biggest statue in front of the town's plaza is a bronze statue of a Marcos man known for legalizing martial law in the 1970s.

Churchgoers during the holiday season's midnight Mass were shocked when they found out that the new monument right in front of the town plaza represented no other than the late former Supreme Court Chief Justice Querube Makalintal.

The monument has been there since Nov. 26 despite strong opposition from non-government organizations.

According to Sandiwa cooperative's chair Emma Alday, they had been opposing the planned erection of the statue since the first week of November.

"But the Sangguniang Bayan approved it and the mayor also approved it. We have been informed that even the provincial governor endorsed it," Alday said. "We told them who Querube Makalintal was and what he had done in 1972. But the local government officials still approved it."

A Supreme Court justice in 1972, Makalintal was described in history books as one of the justices who approved of martial law.

Neveragain.com, a webpage run by martial law victims, further describes Makalintal as the Supreme Court justice who legalized martial law.

After the proclamation of martial law, Makalintal was promoted as chief justice of the Supreme Court. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

World Bank impressed with Mindanao development plans

KIDAPAWAN CITY—The World Bank was impressed with the performance of the Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP) for the past six months.

In a review conducted recently by WB representatives, MRDP was cited for meeting the expectations of the WB.

The MRDP is a P22-billion foreign assisted project of the Department of Agriculture serving the provinces of Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Agusan del Sur, Sultan Kudarat and Compostela Valley.

Carolina Figueroa-Geron, WB task team leader, said the WB mission was pleased at how MRDP pursued its activities that apparently helped many impoverished municipalities of Mindanao.

"The improvements in the implementation of the projects, both in terms of its physical and financial management aspect, have been sustained since the project was upgraded to satisfactory (classification) in May 2003," she said.

The program hit an overall weighted physical accomplishment of 77 percent for components under the Rural Infrastructure and Community Funds for Agricultural Development.

Agriculture Undersecretary Edmund Sana said the intention of the program was to install a mechanism that would ensure the sustainability of the projects beyond the program life. *Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Opponents of coal-fired plant get death threats

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

BANATE, Iloilo—Tension has risen over the planned construction of a coal-fired plant in this town after opponents of the project reportedly received death threats.

Fr. Winefredo Losaria, parish priest of the St. John the Baptist Catholic Parish, said leaders of the various groups opposing the construction of a 100-megawatt coal-fired plant by the Korean Electric Power Company (Kepco) have received death threats from unidentified callers.

"They were warned to go slow otherwise they (would) be killed or something (bad) would happen to them," Losaria said during a public hearing of the House committee on natural resources on Thursday.

In an interview, Losaria said he could not identify who was behind the threats because they could not identify the callers.

Warning signs

Fr. Marco Sulayao, parish priest of the Philippine Independent Church, said he had noticed at least three motorcycle-riding men parking in front of the church "doing nothing" several times after he spoke in one of the rallies against the project last month.

A businessman, who asked not be named and one of the leaders of the anti-coal plant groups, said his wife received three phone calls from two unidentified men, telling her to warn her husband to "lie low" in the protests against the project.

Kepco is proposing to build a $150-million plant on a 25-hectare area in the coastal village of San Salvador, Banate, around 54 km north of Iloilo City.

The project under a build-operate-own scheme is among the measures meant to offset the looming power crisis on Panay Island, according to energy officials.

Around 2,000 Banate residents attended the hearing at the town's multi-purpose gymnasium.

Speakers, mostly against the project, took turns in airing their reasons for opposing the project.

Speech

The hearing was prompted by a privilege speech of Bayan Muna Rep. Siegfred Deduro on Dec. 1, calling the attention of the House on the possible environmental hazards that would be brought by the project.

Representatives of Kepco and Banate officials, who had signed a memorandum of understanding with the Korean firm, failed to attend the hearing.

The committee secretariat reported that the Kepco representatives were unable to secure a flight from Manila. There was no explanation why Banate Mayor Carlos Cabangal Jr. failed to attend.

Mayor of Cebu City given title of sultan

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The Queen City of the South now has a "sultan."

The Office of Muslim Affairs-Central Visayas (OMA-7) has crowned Mayor Tomas Osmeña as Sultan of Cebu and his wife Margot as Princess.

The mayor, donned in a bright orange Muslim inspired outfit, was given a kris and a "gorang," symbolizing his stature, during a small but lavish ceremony on Thursday at the OMA office in the North Reclamation Area.

Sakiran Hadjan, OMA director for Central Visayas, said Osmeña "can now be treated with respect by other Muslim countries whom he can invite to invest in Cebu ... and can be a judge and implement Islamic laws respected by the Philippine government."

He said Osmeña was given the title because of his concern and support to the Muslim community and because of his family tree.

He said the Osmeña surname can be traced to the title Usman who is the third caliphate of Islam.

Hadjan said there was nothing political about conferring the title to the mayor because this was decided by the different Muslim groups in Metro Cebu in September.

But a top leader of the Muslims federation in Cebu City claimed they were not consulted about it.

"I challenge Director Hajan to name the Muslim communities that he consulted," said lawyer Macaundas Hadjirasul, president of the United Muslims Federation in Cebu City.

Hadjirasul, who also served as graft investigator and prosecuting officer in the Office of the Ombudsman in the Visayas, clarified that they were not protesting the title given to Osmeña couple.

But he added they could not also express their support because they were not consulted about it.

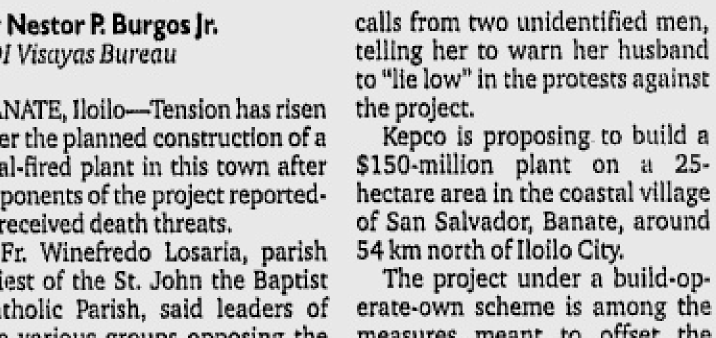
Hadjirasul said OMA must consult them on matters such as this because it could set a bad precedent in the future.

"A non-Muslim cannot be a sultan among Muslims," he said.

The United Muslim Federation is composed of at least five groups—the Cebu Green Mosque, Cebu Islamic Center in Camputhaw, Colon Muslim Jamaa, Visayas Muslim Multipurpose Cooperative and the Leon-Kilat Islamic Association.

Hadjirasul could not estimate the total number of members but these could reach thousands.

Though the title was only honorary, Hadjirasul said they would discuss the matter if the title should be given to the mayor. *With a report from Wilfredo A. Rodolfo III, PDI Visayas Bureau*



ANTI-JUETENG AWARD

PHOTO FROM KBLSJ

Mayor Gilmour de Leon Acero of Siniloan, Laguna receives a second award for keeping his town jueteng-free. The award was given by the Krusadang Bayan Laban Sa Jueteng (KBLSJ) of the Department of Interior and Local Government, police and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

INQUIRER Mindanao

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Nico A. Alconaba

A dream come true in Kidawa

By Yul Olaya
Laak, Compostela Valley

STANDING on the hill where the high school once stood, I can recall the amount of hard work the community exerted to put up those round timber posts, the money they pooled to buy the nails to fasten the bamboo grills, the time women spent in collecting nipa leaves to be woven for the roof, the sweat most of the youth and their fathers took to flatten the surface of that hill.

It was 1998, on the same occasion as this Christmas vacation, that the community started working to construct the classrooms. Many parents were elated at what seemed like the gradual unfolding of a dream they have been longing for their children.

Manong Wilson repeatedly said, "Ensuring education for our children is the only possession we can leave behind."

Wilson, a father of four children who benefited from the school, have neither toys nor new clothes to give to his children this Christmas. But as he once again said, "Education is the most and the best gift parents can give to the children."

This has been the driving force of the parents in Barangay Kidawa in Laak, Compostela Valley, that led them in fulfilling a long-time dream of establishing the Kidawa High School.

The school is more about achieving a common dream and not being deterred by the crisis and conflict situations. It is about going beyond the limitations and working together to overcome the challenges.

Barangay Chair Joseph Espadon, who helped lead the community to its monumental dream, said, "*Nabuhat ni siya dala sa paghi-usa sa magkalain-lain nga pwersa* (All of these are a result of the different forces uniting together as one)."

NPA stronghold

Kidawa is situated 38 km from its mother town of Laak, inhabited by the Mandaya people, Cebuanos and Ilongos. Surrounded by mountains and forests, it lies in the rugged boundary of four municipalities of Agusan Del Sur and Compostela Valley.

Because of this distance and remoteness, Kidawa became a New People's Army stronghold and its people became a solid "*masa*" (NPA mass base), particularly after the martial law period in the early 1980s. This situation forced many residents to evacuate and settle in other places. However, many families started to return when the school was established beginning 1998.

UNDETERRED by the lack of instructional materials, a teacher at the Kidawa National High School presses ahead with the day's lesson. YUL OLAYA

A GROUP of students pool their creative juices to write a poem after learning rules on "pluralizing" in an English class. YUL OLAYA

Teacher volunteers

While a growing tension simmered between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the military in Central Mindanao in 1997, Kidawa, in the northern part of the island, moved ahead and linked up with other institutions that can help it build a high school.

This led to establishing a relationship with the University of the Philippines Mindanao. This relationship went along way fulfilling a dream in the years that followed.

Even without the go signal from the then Department of Education, Culture and Sports to open a high school in Kidawa, two *gurong pahinungod* volunteers (teacher volunteers) entered the place like ordinary visitors. Immediately upon their arrival in June 1998, classes started with only two things present—the teacher and the students.

Convinced by the determination of the community and the presence of the volunteers, the DECS sent another teacher to show its support and ensure smooth operations of the school, consistent with its procedures.

The volunteers were deployed by the Ugnayan ng Pahinugod, the volunteer service program of UP, through its Gurong Pahinungod (GP). The program's main objective was to field more teachers and spread the spirit of youthful idealism and enthusiasm inside the classroom.

In the case of Kidawa, there were no teachers and classrooms to speak of then, only new and old elementary graduates, plus the determined parents and community members who were ready to work for whatever their newly found school would demand.

The volunteers had to deal with exhaustion from being overwhelmed by the amount of work, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Annalyn Cabalquinto, one of the two pioneering GPs in the area, once remarked, "The hardest part was handling the students who have not been inside the classroom for a long time. Added to this was the high expectation of the community that changes in the behavior among their children would be seen immediately."

Gemma Liboon, the partner of Annalyn, added, "We embrace each other and then move on."

Twenty-three other volunteers followed Annalyn and Gemma. Through the years, they reflected on the task in response to Kidawa's call for education as a mix of inspiration and exhaustion.

On the second school year of the Kidawa High School, the volunteers acted like "teacher-mountaineers."

Michael Gatela, now the GP coordinator of Pahinungod in UP Mindanao, was once deployed in Kidawa.

"We had to load our backpacks with books, lesson plans, chalk and an eraser, casserole, rice, canned sardines and noodles, sleeping bags and water. We tied a bolo around our waists and put on our boots. And off we went down the muddy paths, rice paddies, cornfields, climbing up and down the hills and at a little distance from our newly constructed classroom, our students would be waving their hands to greet us good morning!" he narrated.

Sweating profusely from their arduous climb, they would immediately start their classes with their boots still on.

Developing school

The students and the community developed a fondness for the volunteers.

"*Iba talaga sila* (They're really different)," Junnifer, a graduate of the school and now a college student, remarked. "They would conduct special classes in their house for those who can hardly catch up with the lessons. I think, if our teachers were just ordinary teachers, they would just have left them be."

"They explained our subjects using real life situations. For example, our economics lessons were about supply, like us being producers as we are farmers and on how we are going to increase our capital," John Wayne, another graduate, said.

News about the developing Kidawa High School attracted many people and this resulted in the rapid increase in enrolment every year. When the school started; 37 students registered. The number increased to 77 during the second year. On its third year (2000-01), enrolment dramatically increased to 172 students. For school years 2001-02 and 2002-03, it climbed to 173 and 174 students.

To date, 55 youths from the barangay have graduated from the school. A number of them benefited from scholarship grants, while the others, determined to continue schooling, are now working on their own to shoulder the cost of studying in college.

Some graduates found jobs in cities and in other areas to help their families in Kidawa, and to save for their studies when they returned to school.

An unanticipated effect among the parents was generated as well. Manang Rosa Magtulis, the former president of the Parents, Teachers and Community Association explained, "I became involved in the affairs of the Barangay Development Council representing the school. These experiences also gave me the skill in weighing what and how things can be done."

Manang Rosa wept while remembering the death of her husband though she continued to affirm, "all the learning I got, I have them in my mind and been applying them in my daily life, especially now that I'm alone."

Kagawad Jun Pasio observed visible changes among the youth.

"Before, the youths used to talk about working in the farm and catching fish in the river. There was really nothing big in their plans. Now, there are already those who are really studying in college. Their mind-set has changed, it's like they already have some visions ... they already have dreams," he said.

House Bill 5671

The school continues to evolve and grow. Eventually, the Kidawa High School Annex, which is attached to the Laak National High School, would be operating on its own with a corresponding budget from the national government. Its "nationalization" is now on the way as House Bill No. 5671 has passed third reading in the House of Representatives.

The bill was submitted and received by the Senate on March 28, hoping that it will be passed as soon as possible. Once approved, the Kidawa High School will be assured of facilities and items for regular teachers. And this achievement will bound to be theirs for a long time to come.

Indeed, the Kidawa High School is the best gift the parents have given to their children.

FOR suggestions and comments, please contact the Ugnayan ng Pahinungod Program, University of the Philippines in Mindanao, or e-mail oecs_upmin@yahoo.com

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So what if FPJ is running for President?

By Christine Godinez-Ortega

DUGONG MINDANAW

We want to know what the Mindanaoan youngblood, middle-aged blood or high blood are thinking about what's happening in Mindanao and the rest of the country.–Ed.

CAN'T we get real now that action star Fernando Poe Jr. has joined the 2004 presidential race?

I'm no FPJ fan and I'm not about to apologize for not watching any of his films. The signature punches that the boys in the family have mimicked are no match to the gun-toting fan from Kausuagan, Lanao del Norte who reportedly fired at FPJ's screen adversary, leaving the moviehouse's screen perforated.

Talk about how the wilder side of Tolstoy's theory of art as being infectious was, in this case, tested. Truth or tall tale, it became the original, urban legend that refuses to die. The incident might have happened only once but if FPJ's friends would have it, a shooting happens every time FPJ's movies are shown in Moroland at the expense of Moro sensibility and the ignorance of the law against public disturbance and destruction of property.

This isn't enough. Rumors abound about his integrity. FPJ is said to be generous to his friends and family, but where, some are asking, does the money come from? It is likewise bruited about that he is like his bosom buddy, ousted President Joseph Estrada, because he too has his paramours and illegitimate children that many in the know choose to turn a blind eye on because this is part of the Filipino macho image.

And so he says he is armed only with his sincerity, concern for his country (*makabayan*) and his common sense, suggesting that he could wave these like a magic wand to cure the country's woes and miseries.

And that's all very well. This country needs a sincere Panday to rebuild itself with new infrastructures, especially bridges to connect Aparri to Jolo and transportation for people and goods could become most convenient than GMA's RoRo.

If memory serves me right, I remember FPJ making it on the front page of a broadsheet on All Souls' Day after he ordered a fence destroyed at a Manila cemetery to allow the surging crowd to get out. The punch line was unrehearsed and, yes, revealing: "*bayaran ko 'yan*" (I'll pay for that) or something to that effect. Perhaps that should take care of what "common sense" from Da King means.

Sincerity, however, isn't the answer if one does not have what it takes to read the fine print on voluminous documents within the bureaucracy.

To be *makabayan*, perhaps, translates to one's having a heart of gold and steel, and knowing what buttons to push when dealing with greedy businessmen, drug syndicates, grafters, murderers, rapists and kidnappers.

In these times when the peso has plunged to its lowest against the mighty US dollar, who is to say our Da King doesn't have the ability to lift the economy? (Someone already had the bright idea of envisioning FPJ ordering the printing of more money bills if money suddenly becomes scarce during his presidency).

If elected president, FPJ would be in a position to promote our own garments industry through his use of denims and long-sleeved polos. The leather goods industry of Marikina City could likewise benefit in having a president wear Made in the Philippines belts and custom-made, waterproof boots for wading, warm and dry, each time Metro Manila floods and/or typhoons hit the provinces.

As he goes about his provincial sorties, we imagine not a presidential hair out of place. Three Flowers Pomade Co. should experience a kind of renaissance during his incumbency.

An FPJ presidency would likewise boost the sunglass industry. This president-to-be can dictate the light to dark tints of his sunglass for various occasions. The not-so-dark tint is for meeting the fans, the medium dark tint for the press conferences and the darkest of shades, when he talks business with the Makati Business Club. During his moments of weakness, he could take off the sunglass while inside the church to better appreciate its stained glass windows.

If FPJ becomes president, health workers of emergency rooms (ERs) in hospitals must stay alert all the time because if art must imitate life, he will not hesitate to carry traffic accident victims to the ERs himself.

Imagine how the PSG (Presidential Security Group) men will lose poundage, huffing and puffing at his heels as the presidential limousine is parked in a corner doing its heroic bit by lugging around cases of San Miguel beer as Da King's "energizer" after a hard day's work.

SOMETHING'S FISHY It's market day for candidates in the May elections. (At right) "Mr. Palengke" himself checks out the prices in San Fernando, La Union with DTI regional director Florante Leal, Rep. Manoling Ortega, board member Pablo Ortega and Mayor Mary Jane Ortega. (Below) Manila Mayor Lito Atienza at the Antipolo market and (far right) Sen. Manuel Villar celebrates his birthday in Divisoria.
TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI PHOTOS

Slides kill 70 in S. Leyte

From page A1

is the site of the ferry terminal for inter-island vessels entering Mindanao via Lipata, Surigao; San Francisco is an interior coastal town facing Sogod Bay.

With bare hands

Lerias said that among the affected villages, Punta in San Francisco was worst hit with some 50 residents confirmed dead.

The death toll was placed at 19 in Barangay Poblacion in Liloan, and one, a village chief, in Cuasi.

Rescuers said 19 persons in five houses at the foot of a hill adjoining the town cemetery in Poblacion were buried in about six feet of mud.

But even as darkness was settling in Liloan yesterday, only six bodies had been recovered.

The bayanihan spirit shone through, with the townsfolk digging at the mud using only shovels and even their bare hands.

Liloan Mayor Zenaida Maamo asked for heavy equipment from the Maasin City government to hasten the search.

Brownout

Lerias said the landslide was triggered by rain pouring incessantly for the past six days.

Strong wind and rain had also knocked down the power posts of the Southern Leyte Electric Co., plunging the entire province in darkness.

"I am definitely saddened," the governor said. "It happened overnight. It is raining even up to now, and there is no power in the entire province."

The rains have also brought floods that swept away three houses along the river in Barangay Malangsa in Liloan, killing Rosalia Abisada, 40, her son Bimboy, and a 10-year-old boy identified only as Ortiga.

In an Agence France Presse report, Liloan Vice Mayor Antonio Maamo said survivors told him that late at night they heard a thundering sound coming down the mountains, and a few minutes later a torrent of mud covered their houses.

Residents panicked and fled for high ground but had difficulty navigating in the darkness, said Teresita Orano, one of the survivors who lost a child in the disaster.

Maamo said getting help for those affected was made more difficult because the landslide had washed out some bridges, preventing heavy equipment from being brought in.

He said rescuers were forced to dig using hand tools like shovels and iron bars.

Senior Inspector Romualdo Baguhin said as many as 20 houses in his town of San Francisco had been buried in the avalanche of mud.

Only 2 choppers available

In Manila, Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman said she was hopeful that some of the missing might have simply fled.

"Let us pray that the death toll will not be that high," she said in a radio interview.

Soliman said she and Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita would visit the scene of the disaster today or tomorrow but would not go to the area immediately in order to ensure that all transport resources were used to help the victims.

Only two helicopters were immediately available for rescue and relief efforts, she added.

Valedictorian

So far, only four of the bodies recovered in Liloan had been identified.

One was that of 15-year-old Irene Orano, a senior at the Himay-angan National High School in Liloan, who was expected to graduate as class valedictorian in March.

Another was that of Irene's eight-year-old niece, Crescilmae Orano.

Irene's mother Teresita was rescued and taken to the Liloan Community Hospital. *(See story on Page A1.)*

Also recovered were the bodies of two children surnamed Mandala, and of a young girl identified as Ma. Joy Yap.

Still to be recovered were the bodies of Reynaldo Yap, his wife Marilyn, and their two children Jun-Jun and Jojie; Romeo Mandala, his wife Editha, and their children Salem, Dodong and Melinda; and Pablo Mabalcon, 70; his wife Maria, 70; and five of their children and grandchildren.

Eugene Matiling, barangay captain of Poblacion, expressed fears that they might not be able to go on with recovery operations because of lack of equipment.

In Surigao City, Mayor Cassura said it was sad that residents had continuously ignored warnings against living on the slope.

"We've been warning them of the danger, but we should not blame each other now. We all learned our lessons in this tragedy," he said.

The deadly mudslide was triggered by rains caused by what the weather bureau described as a low-pressure area hovering over the Caraga region.

The low-pressure area brought in more rains than the Agusan River and other major tributaries could take.

Agusan River

On Thursday, the Agusan River, one of Mindanao's major tributaries, swelled and inundated villages in the two Agusan provinces and Surigao del Sur.

Three people died Thursday when the boat they were riding capsized off Esperanza, Agusan del Sur.

On Friday, a fourth victim died while trying to save his belongings from the raging river in Remedios T. Romualdez town in Agusan del Norte.

In Davao City, a five-year old girl died Friday when a landslide hit the gold-rush area of Mt. Diwalwal in Compostela Valley at around noon.

Melcar Stella, deputy director of the Office of Civil Defense in Southern Mindanao, identified the child as Grace Lyn Bustamante.

Grace Lyn's father, mother and grandmother were wounded.

In Malacañang, President Macapagal-Arroyo declared a state of calamity in Southern Leyte and other provinces.

The President said she had ordered the National Disaster Coordinating Council and support agencies to step up rescue and assistance operations in communities hit by landslides and flooding in Southern Leyte and other areas of Central Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Northern Mindanao and Southern Mindanao.

"At this time of agony and tragedy in the South, let all of us unite and spare no effort and expense to save life, limb and livelihood among our disaster-stricken *kababayan*," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

Troops mobilized to help

Her deputy spokesperson, Ricardo Saludo, said the government would provide medical assistance to the injured and shelter and relief to those who were forced to flee their homes.

Troops from the Army's 43rd Infantry Battalion were mobilized to conduct rescue operations because two helicopters in Maasin could not take off and a Navy ship could not leave Tacloban City because of bad weather.

Ermita said he had directed the National Food Authority in Maasin to release 500 sacks of rice to Governor Lerias for distribution to affected residents in Southern Leyte. *With reports from Franklin M. Caliguid and Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Joey Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau; TJ Burgonio and Gil Cabacungan Jr. in Manila; AFP*

Memories of Ormoc

THE LANDSLIDE in Southern Leyte is awakening memories of a similar story of death and destruction.

It was on Nov. 5, 1991, when Ormoc City in Leyte was struck by a devastating flood and landslide brought by typhoon "Uring."

More than 5,000 people, many of them women and children, perished. More than 4,000 were never found.

Walls of mud and water roared down the mountains, washing away shanty settlements along the coast, sweeping people into the sea and burying others.

The coastal area experienced a "storm surge," or exceptionally high waves whipped up by strong winds brought by the typhoon.

This surge coincided with the high tide and the raging descent of water and mud down the denuded mountains.

Rampant illegal logging that led to the denudation of Ormoc's forest cover was blamed for the flood that destroyed 90 percent of the city's infrastructure. *PDI Research*

Survivors saved . . .

From page A1

killing 19 persons belonging to four families.

Almoguerra said the five houses had no protection from the landslide because the occupants cut down the trees that they had planted.

One of the houses belonged to Teresita Orano, 47, who lost a daughter—Irene, 15—and a grandchild—Crescilmae Llorente, 8—in the tragedy.

Teresita herself was rescued and taken to the Liloan Community Hospital.

Irene, a senior student at the Himay-angan National High School, wanted to become a teacher or to work abroad to help her family, the grieving mother said.

Premonition

Teresita recalled that on Friday night, Irene had a premonition that something bad would happen because it had been raining heavily for five days.

But she told Irene not to worry and just help her make the Christmas lanterns that she planned to decorate their house with.

Teresita said she even told Irene that she was already old at 47 and could die anytime. She is separated from her husband Miguel, 60.

This was Teresita's recollection of the fateful night:

After finishing two Christmas lanterns, Irene went to bed and Teresita joined her later.

Last word

Soon a loud sound jolted Teresita, and she could not move her body. She saw Irene crying and apparently dying.

"*Tabang* (Help)!" Irene said. It was the last word she uttered.

Teresita, too, shouted for help, but in her mind, she also wanted to die. She lost consciousness and when she came to, she was in the hospital.

Neighbors said they found Teresita and Irene under a mosquito net, in each other's arms.

"*Nagbasol ko nganong nabuhi pa ko, di ko gustong mawala nako ang akong anak kay maoy akong pinangga kaayo* (I regretted having survived. I do not want to lose my daughter whom I love so much)," Teresita said, weeping.

She said that had her husband Miguel been with them, Irene might have been saved.

She also said Miguel was living with another woman in Abuyog town although he would sometimes visit them to give them money and rice.

Another lost daughter

Yet another mother is mourning the loss of her daughter.

Teresita's other daughter, Jocelyn "Lynlyn" Llorente, 29, was inconsolable as she watched over the body of her own daughter Crescilmae in a chapel.

She said she, too wanted to die.

Llorente lived in a house near her mother's. She and her four other children were rescued by neighbors.

But Crescilmae was not as lucky. Her body was found near the door of their house.

It appeared that she had been knocked down by a cabinet during the landslide.

Baby Almoguerra said her husband immediately went outdoors when they heard the cries of Llorente's children following the loud sound.

She said her husband discovered that the landslide had roared through the Llorente house and cut it in two.

A year of booboos and royal scandals

From page A1

howlers to keep the public more than entertained.

For many years, Princess Stephanie of Monaco has kept the gossip columnists in business with the ups and downs of her turbulent love life, which have often left her father Prince Rainier on the edge of despair.

But this year even the 38-year-old princess settled down, although her choice of husband, Portuguese circus performer Adans Lopes Peres, nine years her junior, whom she married in a secret ceremony in Switzerland in September, raised more than a few eyebrows in the principality, and showed that Stephanie has perhaps not quite thrown off the "enfant terrible" tag.

Another royal marriage which promises a touch of the unexpected was that of Dutch Prince Johan Friso.

The wedding will go a long way to quashing rumours of the prince's homosexuality but he will have to give up his claim to the throne when he marries Mabel Wisse Smit next April as she has been shown to have links with a leading drugs baron.

Strangest of all

Probably the strangest royal scandal of the year involved Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne.

A London newspaper carried allegations that he had been involved in a sexual incident with a male royal servant years earlier but with a High Court injunction barring Britain's press from reporting the minutiae of the encounter, the public were left with the baffling reports of Charles' office issuing a robust denial in November about an event no one was allowed to publish details of.

Political scandals often appear to be two-a-penny where Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi is concerned and he did not disappoint the pundits this year.

Gaffe-prone PM

Having seen a law passed in parliament granting him and the four leading government ministers immunity from prosecution while in office, sparing Berlusconi the embarrassment of standing trial while head of the European Union, the gaffe-prone media magnate promptly put his foot right in it.

Just two days after taking over the European presidency for six months in July, Berlusconi sent relations between Italy and Germany into a nosedive by responding to criticism from a German member of the European Parliament by taunting him that he would make a good Nazi concentration camp chief in a film being shot at the time.

The anger that engendered even caused German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder to cancel his Italian summer holiday.

'Mentally deranged'

Berlusconi was at it again a few months later, supporting the record of Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini and claiming "he never killed anyone" but merely "used to send people on holiday...." And to cap a controversial year for Berlusconi, he earned the wrath of the Italian judiciary by dubbing the country's judges "mentally deranged."

One politician in trouble is Lithuanian President Rolandas Paksas, who faces impeachment proceedings brought by parliament over his alleged links with organized crime, which it is claimed means he violated the constitution and his oath of office.

Paksas, a former stunt pilot who won an upset victory in January over outgoing Valdas Adamkus, a 76-year-old US emigre, has consistently denied doing anything wrong and insists he will not resign, despite repeated calls from top political and church leaders, including Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas.

Russian flag

The United States caused a minor diplomatic incident when to mark a banquet at the Pentagon in honor of Romanian President Ion Iliescu, they placed what they thought was the national flag on his plate—except that no one told them it was the Russian flag. The Romanian press pointed out that if he did not bat an eyelid, it was probably due to his own close links with Russia, where he studied in the 1950s.

In the sporting arena, Australia somehow contrived to insult Spain before the final of the Davis Cup tennis tournament when they played the wrong national anthem, having unearthed the pre-Civil War republican anthem which has not been the official anthem for more than 60 years. For the record, the Spanish lost the tie. *AFP*

METRO
E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

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HOLIDAY SHOPPING BLUES

Police: If you have nothing to do, stay home

ERIK ARAZAS

A POLICE unit on patrol in Makati

By Luige del Puerto and Tina Santos

IN THIS season of giving, criminals will take what they could.

Police officials yesterday warned the public that to avoid falling prey to thieves and snatchers, the best thing to do is simply to stay at home.

"Malls are overcrowded, traffic is very heavy, so help the police help you… if you have nothing to buy or nothing to do, just stay at home," said Senior Supt. Ericson Velasquez.

National Capital Region Police Office Chief Deputy Director Gen. Ricardo de Leon yesterday also announced that security measures are in place for the holidays.

Velasquez yesterday shared a few tips with the public, particularly shoppers, on how to avoid getting mugged.

"Look smart and walk confidently, whether you are on the street or inside a mall," he said. "Criminals stalk those who look easy to rob."

Velasquez is the police chief of Mandaluyong City—home to SM Megamall, Shangri-La and StarMall, three of the biggest shopping centers in the metropolis.

Velasquez also advised shoppers not to talk to strangers, and never to trust people they have just met.

Other tips he shared include:

- Avoid wearing flashy jewelry. Criminals get tempted very easily.
- Secure your wallets. Don't place them in loose pockets.
- Bring just enough money, don't count cash in public.
- In crowded places, hold your bags up front, not at the back where you can't see them. Never leave your things unattended.
- Don't bring children when shopping, unless it is absolutely necessary. They don't help out.
- Prepare a buying list so you won't have to linger in a department or grocery store. The sooner you can get home, the better for you.
- If you see a suspicious-looking person, or a suspicious-looking bag, let the police know immediately.

Yesterday, NCRPO Chief de Leon made the rounds of different public transport stations to check on the security measures being carried out.

CDe Leon said that he has also ordered Metro Manila policemen to step up the monitoring of LRT, bus and shipping stations in Manila in anticipation of the holiday rush to and from the provinces.

Uniformed as well as plainclothes policemen have also been patrolling the malls in Metro Manila.

In northern Metro Manila, the four police stations have raised the security alert.

Camanava Police officials yesterday said that they are taking "aggressive" steps to ensure the safety of residents there.

Car-towing company faces raps from cop

By Leila B. Salaverria

EVEN cars of police officials are not spared from indiscriminate towing.

Sr. Supt. Juanito de Guzman, Deputy District Director for Administration of the Western Police District, whose car was towed by Cathy and Kyle Towing Company yesterday lodged a complaint against WPD Traffic Enforcement Group head Supt. Gil de Castro and six employees of the towing company at the WPD general assignments section.

In his complaint, De Guzman claimed De Castro had ordered the employees of Cathy and Kyle Towing Company to remove vehicles parked along Palanca Street in Quiapo, Manila at about 7 a.m. yesterday.

The INQUIRER called De Castro by telephone several times yesterday but failed to reach him.

De Guzman said his maroon Isuzu Crosswind (XAC 120) had dents on the rear bumper, scratched fenders and damaged mag wheels after it was towed from Palanca Street, where he parked his vehicle to attend to the security concerns during the inauguration of the newly renovated Rizal Avenue. He said the damage to his vehicle costs P20,000.

"I'm not angry because my vehicle was towed. That's okay with me. I'm angry because of the manner employed to tow my car," he said.

The six employees of the towing company were identified as Aristedes Macombo, 30, Dario Bongutan, 22, Rene Cascano, 26, Gilbert Marluza, 25, Elias Nuvio, 26, and Renato Reynaldo, 53, and were detained at the WPD.

De Guzman said the personnel of the company continued towing his vehicle even when its side was scraping against the pavement.

He said the towing company employees carried no authorization with them, were not in uniform and were not accompanied by policemen or Metro Manila Development Authority traffic aides as the law prescribes.

But Nuvio, who was the impounding team's group leader, said they towed de Guzman's vehicle upon De Castro's orders because traffic was building up and the streets had to be cleared. He also said they had proper authorization and claimed that there were many policemen in the area when they towed away De Guzman's vehicle.

An official from the traffic group who declined to give his name also yesterday said the towing company was willing to pay for the damages to De Guzman's vehicle.

Cathy and Kyle Towing Company was also the subject of an earlier complaint filed by Manila councilor (1st district) Isko Moreno, whose van had been towed while he was attending a session at the Manila City Hall.

Quack doctor gets 4 years in prison

By Philip Tubeza

THE SUPREME Court sentenced quack doctor Romeo Mole to four years in jail for sexually abusing a 34-year-old woman after he hypnotized her in Makati City.

The high court's Third Division reversed a Makati court's ruling that convicted Mole of rape due to inconsistencies in the victim's sworn statement.

The high tribunal also reduced Mole's sentence of life imprisonment to only four years in prison, saying the convict was guilty only of acts of lasciviousness.

"Inconsistencies in the testimony of (the victim) put serious doubts on her claim of rape, compelling this Court to reverse appellant's conviction," according to Justice Conchita Carpio-Morales.

The tribunal noted that, upon questioning in open court, the victim gave conflicting statements on whether she lost consciousness before or after Mole had raped her inside her home.

But the SC said that Mole was liable for acts of lasciviousness because the records "clearly" showed that he mashed her breasts, kissed her lips and laid on top of her.

It said he should suffer a minimum of six months up to four years and two months in prison.

In April 1997, the victim's family had consulted Mole because they were experiencing itchiness all over their bodies. He told the victim, her husband and their three children that they were victims of witchcraft, and asked for P935 to purchase 17 black candles to rid the family of the evil spell.

The family went to Mole's house on April 12, 1997 for "treatment." He accompanied the family to their home where he lighted two of the black candles. Mole also drank gin with the victim's husband who passed out. He left at about 11 p.m. after the victim paid him P350 for his "services." But Mole returned, warning the victim that a "sorcerer" would kill her youngest son if she did not give Mole P2,500 to protect the boy. He then sprinkled a pungent liquid on her, her husband and their three kids. He also sprinkled the same liquid on the victim's eyes and blew something on her chest. While looking at her eyes, Mole also mumbled something "at which point (the victim) instantly felt weak and dizzy," the Court said.

Mole then dragged her to the kitchen where he abused her.

But the victim gave conflicting statements on when she lost consciousness. She had told the Makati court that she lost consciousness while he was beginning to abuse her, and then later said that she fainted after Mole had finished raping her.

WPD chief tells men: Try not to look like criminals

WESTERN Police District lawmen yesterday were warned not to look anything like the kidnappers they were supposed to catch.

WPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong also reminded his men to refrain from conducting drug-related operations and, instead, leave that to the authorized anti-illegal drug groups of the police.

Bulaong's Dec. 8 memo said that kidnappers have passed themselves off as policemen from anti-drug groups and pretended to be arresting a person who they were actually abducting.

"Through this kind of operation, the hard-earned trust of the citizenry to the PNP personnel might vanish and the PNP's credibility would be at stake," Bulaong said in the memo.

But in cases where policemen catch a drug suspect in the act of dealing illegal substances, the policemen should turn over the case immediately to the chief of the drug unit of the nearest police station or to the station's commander.

Bulaong said the credit for the arrest would still go to the cops who had caught the suspect.

"Rest assured that merit will be credited to the arresting officer of the said operation. The affidavit of arrest will still be the sole basis for the recognition (of the case)," the WPD chief said.

Earlier, several kidnapping incidents occurred in Metro Manila. One victim was soft drink executive Betti Chua Sy. Sy was snatched near her home in Quezon City and then shot in the leg. Her body was found the next day.

In Manila, a 10-year-old Filipino-Chinese girl was snatched from her nanny and driver, but was released unharmed about a week later after her family paid ransom.

Checkpoints have also been established over Metro Manila to prevent more crimes from happening. *Leila Salaverria*

YOUTH TECH

Pasig City public schools go online

By Marlet Salazar

CHILDREN in public schools may not be as familiar with the Internet as those who go to private schools—but they are getting there.

Private corporations and local government units have banded together to connect public school students to the World Wide Web.

Students of the four annex schools of Rizal High School (Kapitolyo, Manggahan, Pinagbuhatan and Rosario) in Pasig City recently found themselves online, courtesy of the Ayala Foundation Inc.'s Youth Tech project.

Youth Tech was developed to help national public high school students learn the basics of computer and provide them access to the Internet.

It was launched in 2000 with the RHS main as one of the pilot beneficiaries of the project.

"This cooperative venture wouldn't be possible if there is one missing," said Gil Genio, CEO of Innove Communications. "I think the overall project is extremely good because both the tools, teachers and local government units are very supportive of the endeavor."

All the Rizal High School annexes already have their own computer laboratories. The Internet connection is what the foundation provided with the assistance of Innove Communications.

STUDENTS of Rizal High School Rosario Annex get to surf the Net.

Innove provides the information technology infrastructure as well as teacher training, said Genio. The communications company also sets up the computer network for the recipient schools.

AFI, on the other hand, provides the technical support, laboratory setup and overall project management. The school shall handle the administrative expenses and the laboratory's maintenance.

Benefactors, local officials, school and student representatives had a digital signing of the memorandum of agreement during the official launch held at the Rosario Annex.

Present were the city's Mayor Soledad Eusebio, Division of City Schools Superintendent Dr. Abella Macarandan, head teachers of the four annexes and representatives of the student body.

So far, the project has provided 85 laboratories, still a long way to their target of 1,000.

"It is just a very tiny portion of what we envision," Genio said.

As long as there is willingness on the part of the school, anyone can be a beneficiary of the project, Genio said.

"There are people who come to the foundation, and there are those that we choose," he added.

The online connection is free during the first year.

In the following years, the parents will then be involved in the sustainability of the project.

Rizal High School principal Josephine Cruz assured that the sites will be screened and the Internet will only be used for e-mail and research work.

Youth Tech has trained 600 teachers and served 42,500 students since its inception three years ago. The public high school teachers are trained in computer network administration, Internet surfing, and its use for teaching and research.

Genio called the endeavor the great equalizer, pertaining to the digital divide between private and public schools.

"The measure of success of the program is going to be measured long-term," he said.

The Internet has become a powerful tool in education. So far, the project has helped increase the level of awareness in information technology and communication among surfers.

PASIG City Mayor Soledad Eusebio, Schools division superintendent Dr. Abella Macarandan, Ayala Foundation manager Tito Gonzalo Rivera and Innove chief executive officer Gil Genio, affix their digital signatures to a memorandum of agreement, launching Youth Tech laboratories in four Rizal High School annexes in Pasig City.

BIR trains guns on 'cracker makers

By Clarissa Batino

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue has found a new target for their tax audits—firecracker manufacturers, suppliers and vendors.

Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. last week said that the BIR had started conducting surveillance operations in the towns of Bocaue and Sta. Maria, Bulacan, where most of the pyrotechnic manufacturers and suppliers have set up shop.

Parayno said this would be the first time that the BIR would try and bring this particular informal sector into the bureau's tax net.

Parayno said the bureau would start the investigation of these shops to help the BIR meet its collection target of P424.5 billion this year.

"Most of the pyrotechnic establishments were found unregistered, but a number of arrests were made for the non-issuance of receipts," Parayno said in a statement. "Encouraged by the results, we have recommended the continuation of the surveillance and investigation."

The BIR had suspended its spot raids, also known as tax mapping operations, from Dec. 16 to Jan. 15, so as not to give unscrupulous officials any opportunity to commit abuses.

The moratorium is intended to allow the unimpeded operation of business during the season, and to dispel misconceptions or misinterpretations on the part of the taxpaying public that such activities shall be used for personal gain by BIR personnel, said Parayno.

He said the suspension of field operations would also allow field personnel to prepare for their yearend accomplishment reports on all tax cases assigned to them for investigation, and to enable the BIR to account for all collections arising from audit assessments.

But the revenue chief said that the BIR would exempt from the Christmas ban the bureau's surveillance group conducting on-site raids on pyrotechnic vendors and manufacturers.

"(Fireworks) are a seasonal product that come out only during Christmas and New Year, so we would take advantage of the period to conduct our operations," he said.

The Christmas moratorium would not cover the investigation of cases prescribed on or before June 30, 2004, the serving of Assessment Notices, Warrants and Seizure Notices for cases prescribed on or before June 30, 2004, the processing and verification of tax returns for the transfer of property, the examination and/or verification of internal revenue tax liabilities of taxpayers retiring from a business, the processing of claims for tax refunds or the issuance of Tax Credit Certificates.

Parayno said that the audit of government agencies, local government units and government-owned or controlled corporations and their subsidiaries and affiliates would not be covered by the moratorium.

In October, the Department of Finance warned the public that some unscrupulous BIR officials have reportedly tried to commit a range of abuses, including extortion, particularly during the so-called tax-mapping operations. The abuses ranged from offering "to fix the problem" to outright extortion.

Parayno said these corrupt practices were being done even before the tax mapping. He said there could also be impostors.

When the BIR launched the tax raids in April, more than 90 percent of the businesses visited had at least one violation. Parayno said so far, the BIR had collected P130 million in penalties from the tax mapping.

Parayno added that the BIR is continuing to institute measures to curb corruption in the ranks. The BIR and Customs are named as the most corrupt public agencies in the country, according to a poll conducted by the Social Weather Station early this year.

The Bureau of Customs recently announced that it had met its P100.056-billion goal for the year and could exceed the P104.566-billion record collection in 1996.

Beware of drunk drivers, say cops

By Luige del Puerto

THE POLICE are worried about Christmas parties.

"People go to parties sober, and some come home drunk," said Chief Supt. Oscar Valenzuela, Eastern Police District chief.

"Again, we urge drivers not to drink and drive," Valenzuela said. "It's been said over and over again. If you can't avoid drinking, please don't drive."

The district director said that in this time of merrymaking, there won't be stopping people from venturing out.

But Valenzuela said it would be better for partygoers to commute instead.

"Take the bus or the taxi," he said. "Or bring along another driver."

Meanwhile, the EPD has moved to help the Metro Manila Development Authority man the worsening traffic congestion in the district.

Valenzuela said that he has ordered station commanders to assign some of their men to control traffic.

A few mobile patrols have also been ordered to do the same.

"Cops assigned in headquarters who have nothing much to do are needed in the streets now," the police official said.

Traffic congestion in Metro Manila during the past few days have become increasingly worse, particularly on roads leading to big malls.

Road diggings and repairs have also contributed to the congestion.

It now would take at least an hour to get to Pasig City from Marikina City, for example, if one takes Amang Rodriguez Avenue.

The police expect things to come to a head as Christmas Eve is approaching.

"If you have an appointment, it's best to hit the street an hour early. Also, avoid the rush hour," Valenzuela said.

Cop accused of pouring hot water on inmates

By Tina Santos

PO1 EDUARDO Roy of Central Police District Station 9 is in hot water.

Two inmates have accused the lawman of pouring hot water on their private parts right inside CPD Station 9 last weekend.

The two inmates—Jojiemar Escramar, 26, of Barangay Pinyahan, Quezon City, and Baldomero Cacharo, 27, of Pook Dagohoy, UP Campus, Quezon City—have already filed a complaint with the police.

Initial investigation revealed that the detainees were caught by the station's desk officer on duty taking shabu right inside their cell on Dec. 14.

The duty officer allegedly took Escramar and Cacharo to the investigation room, where he reportedly mauled the detainees.

That afternoon, PO1 Roy reportedly arrived and, upon learning of the acts committed by the two, allegedly doused hot water on their private parts.

According to investigators, the hot water caused "injuries of still undetermined duration" to the complainants.

According to the police report, CPD Central Investigation Unit members took Roy into custody and later turned him over to Station 9 commander Supt. Dante Narag.

The INQUIRER tried to reach Roy for comment but was told that the police officer was "out of the office."

Correction

DUE to an inadventence, the wrong head was used over Ramon Tulfo's column yesterday. The head should have been: "Roco called 'arrogant.'"

'Pacquiao' packs them in at the Malabon zoo

By Tina Santos

HE WAVED at the children and posed with them for souvenir pictures as the kids tirelessly chanted his name: "Pacquiao! Pacquiao!"

He charmed them with his antics, which he performed without pulling any punches.

And for most of the children, this encounter with Pacquiao during the pre-Christmas party organized by a group of reporters at the Malabon Zoo and Aquarium one recent Sunday afternoon, proved to be the most joyous thing that happened to them this holiday season.

The children are wards of the Tahanang Mapagkalinga in Caloocan City, a refuge for streetchildren, and exploited, abused and abandoned juveniles. And Pacquio is a baby orangutan named after International Boxing Federation superbantam champion Manny Pacquiao.

The pre-Christmas party was organized by the Northern Media Group, with the help of non-government organizations and local government and police officials in the Camanava (Caloocan-Malabon-Navotas-Valenzuela) area.

The affair was a far cry from the usual parlor-games and sing-and-dance routine of most children's parties.

Instead of party favors that children get to bring home, these kids brought home memories and an unforgettable experience with wild animals, which would hopefully inspire them to help protect nature and the environment. The zoo, which was virtually transformed into a classroom to educate people on environmental preservation of forests and wildlife, provided the children a distinct privilege to pet the wild animals, which usually avoid human contact.

"I hope the zoo inspires these kids and encourages them to do simple things to protect nature, like plant trees and dispose of garbage properly. I hope they will be "charmed" by the animals and become their defenders," zoo owner Manny Tangco, who took the kids on an educational tour, said.

But unlike their fondness for Pacquiao, the kids nearly had the scare of their lives when Tangco led Mr. Suave, a young Bengal tiger, out of the cage with a metal leash to meet the children.

But their fear was short-lived. A few brave boys run their fingers through Mr. Suave's copper-orange fur with jet-black stripes while it was being fed milk from a baby's milk bottle.

The children might not be aware that they are lucky to have seen and actually touch Mr. Suave, which is now an endangered specie.

"From about 100,000, Bengal tigers now number only about 2,500," Tangco told his attentive young "students."

MR. SUAVE, the baby Bengal tiger, gets to feed from a bottle, Malabon zoo owner Manny Tangco (in the Santa outfit) looks on. RUDY ESPERAS

PACQUIAO, the orangutan, waves to his well-wishers.

THE CHILDREN of Tahanang Mapagkalinga get to have a free meal after their day at the zoo.

Some of the children were also brave enough to touch and dance with Ocho-ocho, a scaly python, while the other children sang to the tune of the hit song.

Tangco also told the children how he and his family actively participate in caring for the animals. He claimed that some newborn animals are even cared for in their bedrooms then released into their cages to mingle with the others when they are old enough.

This kind of affection, most of the children have not experienced. But it has triggered the longing of Carla, a 10-year-old girl, for her family.

She said she missed her parents, especially her mother.

"I wish to see my mom one of these days and (I hope) she would already take me with her (so I can) feel again her love and care just like how Sir Manny (Tangco) shows concern for his pets," said Carla in Filipino.

She claimed she was abandoned by her parents because of poverty.

"*Nakakaiingit sila* (animals), *parang si Sir Manny ang pinaka-tatay nila* (I envy the animals who have a father in Sir Manny)," Carla said.

But she was quick to add how thankful she was to her new-found family, the Tahanang Mapagkalinga staff, for making her and the other children, who she now considers as her siblings feel loved and secured.

Carla said street educators of Tahanang Mapagkalinga helped them get off the streets and made them realize that they still have a chance at a better life.

Her fondest wish is to be able to return to the Malabon Zoo and Aquarium.

"I hope another kind-hearted sponsor would take us here again another time," Carla said.

In Manila, days of 'Eddie' and 'Patty' are over

By Tarra Quismundo

THE DAYS of Manila's "Eddie and Patty" are almost over.

"Do you know 'Eddie?' He's the man who would charge you extra, other than the permit fee, when you process papers," Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr. said in jest. "And when you ask what the fee is for, he would tell you '*E 'di akin* (it's for me).'"

Atienza on Wednesday was entertaining around 300 businessmen and members of the city's business groups during the Manila Business Summit at the Manila Hotel.

He said Patty is Eddie's accomplice.

"When you come back to Eddie to get the permit, he will ask for some money again, and when you ask him for what this new fee is, he will tell you, '*pati yung mga kasama ko* (for my colleagues)."

For Atienza, Eddie and Patty are characters who symbolize business agents and persons from city hall who make a living out of kickbacks—the practice of squeezing money out of unfortunate businessmen and establishment owners who need to renew their business permits.

"They will soon be out of the picture when we implement this new program that will get rid of business agents and speed up the process of renewing permits," Atienza said, adding that such corruption will be kept off Manila's revenue-generating agencies for as long as he is in power.

City Hall is set to implement the Pre-Approved Permit system (paper system), under which the renewal of business permits will be fast-tracked.

The paper system will shorten the application for renewal of permits to three steps: Application, tax assessment and payment.

Upon payment, the business owner will be issued the pre-approved permit.

"The idea is that we are not going to require them to submit other documentary requirements that cause waiting time for the business owners, because (we assume) that they are already legitimate businesses since they have already been allowed to operate by City Hall," City Treasurer Liberty Toledo said during an interview.

Under the current system, some 40,000 businesses have to submit certification from the Department of Trade and Industry, previous receipts and permits, barangay clearance and documents pertaining to their insurance policies to the city's Business Promotion and Development Office. The office then submits these documents to the City Treasurer's Office for assessment and collection of fees and taxes.

Things are going to change for some 20 percent of the city's business establishments, as the 8,000 top businesses will experience the paper system when they renew their permits next year.

These businesses account for 79 percent of the city's total business tax revenue in the current year.

Oreta anti-piracy bill to criminalize digital piracy

By Nini Valera

A BILL that will criminalize digital piracy is expected to be passed into law before the elections next year, according to opposition Sen. Tessie Aquino Oreta.

She told INQUIRER Entertainment last week that the Optical Media Bill would help save the local entertainment industry, which employs at least a million Filipinos. Oreta is chair of the Senate committee on public information and mass media.

But actor and Videogram Regulatory Board head Bong Revilla is not in favor of the bill, saying that the proposed Optic Media Board will not have the authority to raid retailers of pirated audio and video materials and confiscate their products.

"With this law, we will only go after the (owners and operators) of replicating machines," Revilla said.

As VRB head, Revilla had confiscated and destroyed more than P5 billion worth of fake video and audio products and duplicating equipment this year alone.

Oreta claimed the OMB will have more teeth than VRB.

"But with the new law, we left open (the provision) on technologies that do not exist yet," Oreta said. "What we did was to consolidate the present day scenario and give the new law more power."

Revilla himself pointed out that the OMB would be "regional and would have bigger budgets" even as he insisted that the "bill has plenty of flaws."

"The bill left out the provision regarding the hologram (in video and audio products), which is the only way you can distinguish if a product is pirated or not."

Oreta's bill also does not include pirated software, the sales of which have cost software companies like Microsoft millions of dollars in losses on legitimate licensing fees.

"No one will really die (with the proliferation) of software piracy here," Oreta pointed out. "*Hindi naman tayo ang* producers *ng* software.

"But piracy of local movies and records can kill an industry. It can kill artists and composers who are deprived of legitimate income."

But Revilla feels that a new anti-piracy law should encompass all forms of piracy, including bogus software.

"Right is right and wrong is wrong. I don't agree with the bill," he said.

Oreta said a less aggressive stand might wipe out the local entertainment industry 10 years from now.

"So how can we flesh out the Filipino talent? That's the reason why we really want this piracy bill to become a law. It starts of the root of the piracy problem... at Customs from where replicating machines pass through. Then we'll go after the buyers. Piracy will not thrive and become an industry in itself if no one would buy pirated products."

Revilla, who will be filing his candidacy as senator in January 2, has recommended actor and former Makati Vice Mayor Edu Manzano to take his place as VRB head.

"If I win as senator, I will work harder to fight piracy," Revilla vowed.

Until such time, Revilla will still be seen in the movies, like "Captain Barbel," in this year's Metro Manila Film Fest. He plays the title role of a costumed crime fighter and savior of humanity with superhuman powers.

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  To switch to Plan 2665, bring recent 2 months' paid non-SMART billing statements with a minimum of P2,450 per month. If bill is less than P2,450 per month, subscriber must submit proof of income of P28,000 per month.
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- Approval of all applications is subject to SMART credit and financial requirements.

*All plans are covered by a 24-month contract period. Pre-termination charges apply. **Credit card transactions are subject to bank approval.

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Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**
Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

SPORTS TV
Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA-Grizzlies vs Hornets; 9 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports—It's a battle of relocated squads as Memphis (formerly Vancouver) collides with New Orleans (formerly Charlotte).

NBA Greatest Games-Jazz vs Blazers, Game 5, 2000 Western Semifinals; 12 noon; Solar Sports—Rewind and catch the classic encounter between Utah and Portland.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

NSAS' REQUEST

House to probe SEAG performance

By Marc Anthony Reyes

GOOD or bad, the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games campaign will have to be scrutinized by the Congress.

House committee on youth and sports chair Monico Puentevella yesterday said he would lead the inquiry on the country's recent stint in the SEA Games upon request of the national sports associations.

The country won 48 gold medals and finished fourth overall which was an improvement of its performance two years ago.

Still, several NSA heads, according to Puentevella, are asking his committee to at least make an assessment of the RP stint in the Games, where more than 600 athletes, coaches and officials took part.

"My committee is always looking for ways to improve the plight of our national athletes," Puentevella told the INQUIRER. "There is always room for improvement."

Expected to be invited in the session are officials of the Philippine Olympic Committee which screened and accredited the athletes and the Philippine Sports Commission.

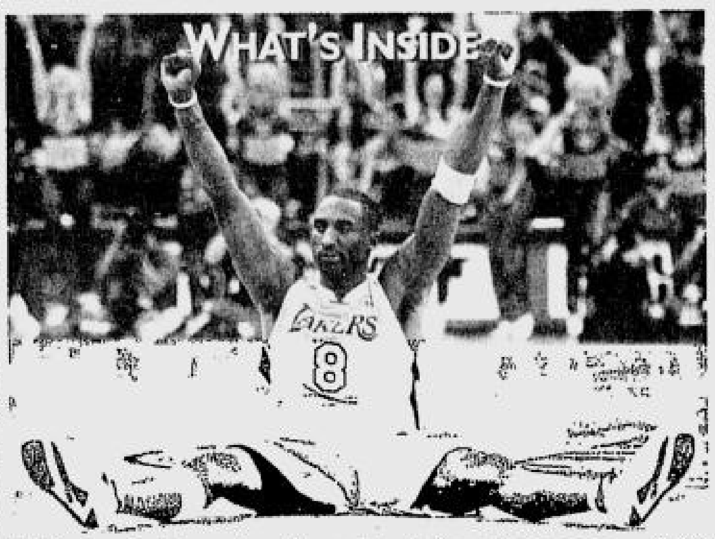
The government, through the PSC, spent P100 million alone for the actual participation of the RP contingent.

Puentevella also defended the staging of the Palarong Pambansa and the Batang Pinoy, which the POC wants to be shelved temporarily so the country can focus its attention on preparing for the 2005 Manila SEA Games.

"That's too much of a sacrifice for the SEA Games," said Puentevella, "because these events are vital components of the country's sports development program."

However, Puentevella said the Mindanao Friendship Games as well as the proposed Luzon and Visayas Games can be postponed.

WHAT'S INSIDE



■ **Kobe hits winning shot for Lakers** /A28

■ **Empire King eyes juvenile title today** /A30

PBA council of elders eyed to solve problems

League has ₱349-M uncollected TV debts

By June Navarro

PBA chair Jun Cabalan yesterday proposed the creation of a council made up of past PBA chairmen to help the league solve critical issues, particularly its problem with the collection of unpaid debts from television coverage.

The PBA is looking at roughly P349 million in uncollected debts since the time of Vintage Enterprises under Bobong Velez in the late '90s up to the appointment of the National Broadcasting Network-Intercontinental Broadcasting Corp. consortium early this year.

League insiders said NBN-4 and IBC-13 have unpaid dues of over P194 million. Viva-Vintage has an outstanding balance of P129 million while Velez owes the PBA P26 million.

"These collectibles will somehow ease the financial burden of the teams. The council of elders will pool their combined intellect on how to recover these losses," said Cabalan.

Past PBA chairmen led by Alaska owner Wilfred Uytengsu, Purefoods-Hormel president Butch Alejo, former Shell exec Rey Gamboa and past Mobiline governor Ignatius Yenko are all expected to respond to the call.

"Their primary goal is to go after the debts of the league's past TV coverors. This problem

PBA/ A26

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FERRIOLS

RP 5 turns back Hong Kong, rules China cagefest

NANAN, China—A 23-point run from 20 points down.

With this unexpected turnaround, the Philippine team went on to repulse Hong Kong, 90-86, Friday and capture the sixth Zheng Chenggong Cup International Invitational basketball championship at the Nanan Sports Center here.

"It was God's will. There's no other way to describe it," said coach Johnny Tam, who retained for the country the title which the Laguna Lakers won in 1999.

"*Talagang pinilit naming manalo alang-alang sa bayan* (We really tried to win for the country). I have to congratulate the boys for a job well done," added Tam

Trailing 56-76 at the start of the fourth and final quarter, the Filipinos scored 23 straight points while holding the enemy scoreless in a seven-minute stretch to turn the game around and silence the pro-Chinese crowd, which had celebrated prematurely.

Surprisingly, the man of the hour for the Filipinos was Britt Carlo Reroma, at 5-7 the smallest member of the 12-man team supported by FedEx and Burlington.

Reroma, one of four players from Philippine College of Criminology, hit three of the team's five three-point shots during the mind-boggling run that finally put the Filipinos ahead for good, 79-76.

Veterans John Ferriols, Ricky Ricafuente, Ryan Bernardo and Danny Capobres and newcomer Brian Ilad also played major roles in the title triumph.

Ferriols scored 11 of his team-high 22 points in the fourth period, while Ricafuente contributed two crucial triples.

Capobres added a putback on top of a solid defensive work while Ilad went 4-of-4 in the freethrow line in the final two minutes.

Ferriols was later named most valuable player of the tournament.

Aside from Ferriols, the other leading scorers for the Filipinos were Bernardo and Marc Macapagal with 14 points apiece, Ricafuente with 13 and Reroma with 11.

Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) secretary-general Graham Lim lauded the Filipinos' impressive showing in the six-team, five-nation tournament held in honor of Nanan's famous national hero, Zheng Chenggong.

Viva keeps PBL semis hopes alive

Welcoat retains solo lead

GAMES TOMORROW (*Pasig Sports Center*)
2 p.m.—Montana vs Viva-FEU
4 p.m.—Welcoat vs Sunkist
6 p.m.—Blustar vs Fash Liquid

By Marc Anthony Reyes

VIVA Mineral Water-FEU displayed the brand of game that gave it the recent Champions' League Cup, downing a badly depleted ICTSI-La Salle squad, 62-53, yesterday to keep its semifinal hopes alive in the PBL Platinum Cup at the San Juan gym.

The Tamaraws, who bested San Sebastian to rule the tournament among the big shots in the collegiate leagues early in the week, won only their second game in eight outings and avoided outright disqualification.

Viva still has to sweep its remaining four games to snare a tie for the last semis slot.

In the second game, Welcoat relied on James Yap and Willy Wilson in the endgame to subdue Fash Liquid Detergent, 82-77, and firm up its hold of the leadership.

Yap nailed down 11 of his 14 points in the final quarter, including eight of the Paint Masters' last 10 points as Welcoat, the only team assured of a semis berth so far, climbed to 8-1 in the standings.

The Paint Masters also avenged their first-round loss to the Liquid Powers, who dropped to 4-4 in a tie with idle Montaña.

The burly Wilson chipped in eight points in the fourth to finish with a game high 20 points and compensate for the fouling out of slotmen Marc Pingris and Nelbert Omolon.

Despite losing key men Mark Cardona, Tyrone Tang and Pocholo Villanueva to injuries, the Archers managed to put up a fight that prevented the Tamaraws from pulling away.

Warren Ybañez and Arwind Santos starred in Viva's windup that finally did ICTSI in and booted it out of contention with a 2-8 slate.

Ybañez, Viva's ace playmaker, connected on a short jumper, while the 6-foot-4 Santos barreled inside for a quick twinner and followed it up with a rousing three-pointer to put the game away at 60-51 with less than two minutes to go.

There will be three games on tap tomorrow at the Pasig Sports Center which will be aired live by Solar Sports and packaged as a basketball marathon.

Scores:

First game:

VIVA-FEU 62—Ybañez 17, Santos 12, Margate 8, Isip 6, Napa 5, Rizada 5, Miranda 4, Misolas 2, Razon 2, Jones 1, Co 0, Sinco 0.

ICTSI 53—Cabatu 15, Aldeguer 9, Jose 9, Yeo 6, Thoss 5, Magsumbol 4, Uy 3, Ramos 2, Gavino 0, Aquino 0.

Quarters: 17-13, 28-29, 47-44, 62-53.

Second game:

WELCOAT 82—Wilson 20, Yap 14, Sotto 13, Tangkay 12, Omolon 9, Pingris 4, Artadi 4, Patrimonio 3, Cua 3, Reyes 0.

FASH 77—Simon 18, Gelig 17, Alvarez 11, Benedicto 10, Dualan 8, Salangsang 5, Tan 2, Mercado 2, Dy 2, Fonacier 2, Tenorio 0.

Quarters: 14-24, 29-40, 57-60, 82-77.

EUGENE Tan of Fash (left) uses his arm to defend the ball against Paul Artadi of Welcoat.
RUDY ESPERAS

SAMSUNG TOUR

Bondoc nips Aunzo in Eastridge playoff

GIVEN a big break with his recent inclusion in the national Putra Cup team, good things keep coming Gene Bondoc's way.

The young Bondoc rolled in a 21-foot birdie on the second extra hole of a sudden-death playoff with club bet Ferdie Aunzo to clinch the championship division crown in the recent Samsung Amateur Tour at the Eastridge Golf Club course in Binangonan, Rizal.

Bondoc got very lucky on the second playoff hole, the par-5 No.2, when his drive hit the cart path and bounced back onto the fairway instead of going out-of-bounds.

Aunzo, meanwhile, needed to recover from a scooped drive, reaching the green in regulation then stroked a 30-foot birdie try to within gimme distance. Facing a downhill putt, Bondoc boldly went for the kill and banged it in.

Bondoc could have won it in regulation but wasted a two-shot lead with a double-bogey on the 17th. He finished with rounds of 71-75-146 while Aunzo had 74-72.

Another national player, Carmelette Villaroman, topped ladies Class A by nine strokes over jungolfer Matet Salivio with a couple of 75s for a 150 total in the tourney co-sponsored are Tokyo Tokyo, Microtel, Gatorade, Rogin-E, Dunlop Golf, Mario's Restaurant, Custom Clubmakers and Wilson with radio stations Killer-Bee, Citylite 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT and 103.5 K-Lite as media partners.

The other men's division winners were Joey Ramoso in Class A, Marco Olives in Class B and Nelson Ang in Class C and Tess Staub in Class B of the ladies division.

Ramoso (77-83-160) won by one over Andy Park; Olives (85-77-162) prevailed by five over Tonton San Diego and Ang (93-92-185) nipped Romy Ordona in a countback. Staub (91-93-184) wound up six strokes ahead of Majoni Pulumbarit.

The top finishers won trophies and Samsung appliances. The division winners also earned slots to the national grand finals slated next year at Mt. Malarayat in Batangas.

The last qualifying leg will be held at Tagaytay Midlands on Jan. 22-23 before the Tour gives way to the Samsung National Interscholastics featuring the best jungolfers in the country scheduled in February.

SPORTSWATCH

Que falters with 81 in Okinawa tilt

FILIPINO Angelo Que scored a nine-over-par 81 yesterday and fell like log, ending the third round of the $910,000 Asia-Japan Okinawa Open next to last at 60th place from a share of 26th the previous day in Okinawa, Japan. After parring the first three holes, Que's game deteriorated with three double-bogeys and the same number of bogeys. Alabang resident Rick Gibson of Canada gained a share of 10th after a 69-214, seven shots off leader Hiroshi Goda (68-207). Que was in 17th spot after a 68 in the opening round and slipped to 26th with a 76 on Friday. Frankie Miñoza missed the cut by a mere stroke with his 70-77-148 after the second round which was suspended due to darkness Friday and resumed early morning Saturday.

A-Rod deal dead, say Boston Red Sox

NEW YORK—The Alex Rodriguez trade is "dead," or so the Boston Red Sox say. The Texas Rangers and the shortstop still have hope. Just hours after commissioner Bud Selig ended talks to restructure A-Rod's $252 million contract Thursday, the Red Sox said Manny Ramirez would not be sent to Texas for the AL MVP. "The proposed trade between the Boston Red Sox and the Texas Rangers is dead," Red Sox president Larry Lucchino said. The Rangers, though, believed they could rekindle the swap of the two highest-paid players in baseball. Rodriguez offered to reduce salaries in his contract by $12 million in exchange for increased marketing and logo use rights, agent Scott Boras said. *AP*

'Noche Buena' derby set Dec. 27, 29

THE ANNUAL "Noche Buena 5-Cock New Year Derby" of well-known promoter Rolly Ligon is all set at Roligon Mega Cockpit on Dec. 27 and 29. For an entry fee of P5,500, the guaranteed prize at stake is P750,000. The fastest kill champion will receive a Christmas gift, according to Ligon. Fans may win any of the following: color TV, DVD player, stereo VCD, gas stove, rice cooker, electric fan, flat iron and Noche Buena basket. For reservation of cockhouses, please contact 833-2275 and 833-1638. Meanwhile, the "Pasko sa Roligon 4-Cock derby" of Roming Vergara unfolds on Tuesday, Dec. 23. Preparations are also under way for the "Roligon 14th Anniversary 7-Cock Derby" on Jan. 31, Feb. 3, 5, 7, 10 and 12, with a staggering P3.6 million guaranteed prize at stake. Entry fee is only P11,000.

Quisay, Yambay join Asian footrace

ADIDAS King of the Road Manila winners Alley Quisay and Liza Yambao left for Bangkok, Thailand yesterday to compete in the King of the Road Asian Championship today. Quisay, a 23-year old national athlete based at the Teacher's Camp in Baguio City, hails from Bolinao, Pangasinan. Yambao, who is also a national athlete, is a 22-year old student of the University of Santo Tomas from Sta. Rosa, Laguna. Both topped the King of the Road Manila with times of 30:11 and 37:38 respectively. They were accompanied by adidas Philippines sports marketing manager Goody Custodio. The race starts in front of the Rajamangala National Stadium. Philippine bet and Southeast Asian Games Gold medalist Eduardo Buenavista won the last Asian title back in 2001.

Fistorama features Cebu boxer

SAMSUNG'S Fistorama today showcases select fights of Benedict Suico, an up and coming boxer from Cebu. The fights were held at the state-of-the-art Joe Cantada Boxing Arena in Bicutan, Taguig. The show is aired weekly in the United States, Australia, Japan and the Middle East through ABS-CBN's Pinoy Central TV. Samsung's Fistorama, now on its second year, is aired at 2 p.m., Sundays, on RPN-9 and is backed by Samsung Electronics Phils. Corp. Golf Power follows the boxing program at 3 p.m.

PBA council . . .

From page A25

needs more attention now that the league is suffering from heavy financial losses," said Cabalan.

Cabalan, however, won't be at the helm when the PBA board tackles his proposal during its first regular meeting next year.

Sta. Lucia Realty governor and team manager Buddy Encarnado was formally elected last week as the PBA's next chairman, inheriting a host of controversies ranging from the drug-testing program, the questionable Filipino-foreign players to its recent breakup with the NBN-IBC consortium.

Encarnado will serve up to May 2005 during a most crucial stretch in the history of the PBA, which has altered its calendar and format to synchronize the league's schedule with the International Basketball Federation (Fiba).

The traditional January-December, tri-conference schedule will now give way to a fiscal year two-conference format (October-May) beginning next season.

Meanwhile, swingman Gary David has applied for the 2004 Annual Rookie Draft next month, joining national teammates Richie Alvarez and Wesley Gonzales of Ateneo de Manila University as prime pro prospects .

The 6-foot-3 David, MVP of this year's Philippine Basketball League-Sunkist Unity Cup and mainstay of the RP team which won the gold in the just-concluded Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam, is expected to be selected in the first round.

Another RP team standout, James Yap of the University of the East Warriors, has also signified his intention to join the draft tentatively scheduled on Jan. 16 at the Glorietta Activity Center. The deadline of application for the draft and accreditation of agents is on Dec. 29.

Cebu ready to host 6 SEAG disciplines

GUARDO

CEBU City yesterday reiterated its bid to become one of the regional hubs when the country hosts the Southeast Asian Games in 2005.

"We are ready to host at least six events without the national government spending a single centavo. Cebu City can do it with the help of the private sector," said Cebu City Sports Commission chair Jonathan Guardo.

"But we will still be happy even if we get to host only two or three events. We just want to share the spirit of the SEA Games to the Cebuanos."

The bulk of the SEA Games activities will be held in Manila but the Philippine Olympic Committee remains in the hunt for satellite hosts that will accommodate at least a couple of calendared events.

Guardo, who was designated by Cebu City government to coordinate with the POC regarding its efforts to bring the Games to the heart of Visayas, said finances for the hosting would come from the private sector and through local marketing.

"Cebu is the next premier city after Manila. We are even the top choice of foreign visitors if security is the main consideration. We have everything to offer our visitors from facilities to accommodation and tourism destinations."

Guardo has already submitted bidding documents in book-bound VCD and VHS forms to the POC early this year. They contain information about the proposed venues, amenities, hotel accommodations, tourist spots, food and Cebu's local culture.

Cebu City prides itself of facilities that have been home to various international events.

Mandaue had hosted Asian Dancesport Championships. Danao was home to countless mountain bike events, including the Asian competition.

The Cebu City Convention Center and Waterfront hotel offer to host weightlifting and martial arts events like boxing, taekwondo, karate, wushu and pencak silat.

If only for accessibility, Cebu takes advantage with an international airport that caters to major airlines that have direct flights to various Asian cities. It is just 45 minutes by plane from Manila.

Guardo is set to meet with POC president Celso Dayrit in January to discuss Cebu's bid.

Jungolf Xmas bash at Riviera tomorrow

PREMIUM items from Nike will be up for grabs in tomorrow's (Dec. 22) Nike Jungolf Christmas Tournament at the Couples course of the Riviera Golf and Country Club in Silang, Cavite.

About 140 jungolfers plus several officials and alumni have signed up for the 18-hole tourney jointly staged by the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines, Riviera and Nike through its local distributor PacSports.

Tee-off starts at 7 a.m. at the Couples and 9 a.m. at the executive course where those in the 8 years and under will be playing.

There will be competitions for boys and girls in Class A (15-17 years), Class B (13-14 yrs), Class C (11-12 yrs), Class D (9-10), Class E (7-8) and the special 6 yrs and under category.

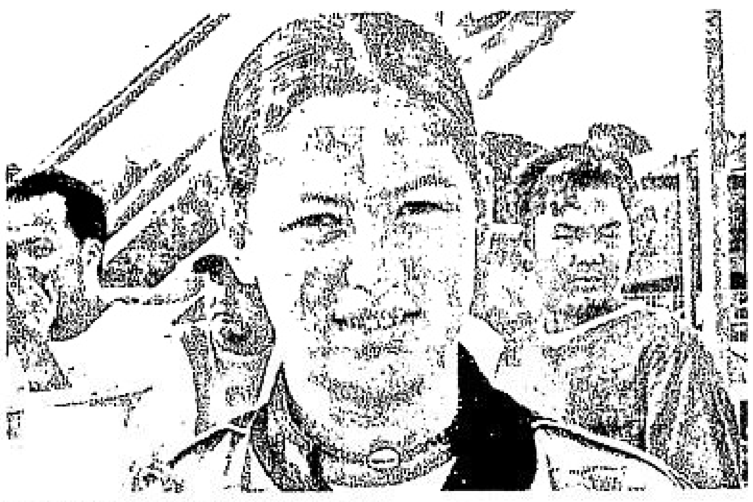
The Nike tourney is one of four holiday break events under the Samsung Jungolf Tour. The jungolfers will also be playing the Alabang Invitational on Tuesday, Dec.23 and the Philippines-Japan Friendship Meet early next year.

Nike equipment including a 275 steel driver, eagle silver driver, birdie blue driver, par red driver forged wedge, putter, standard bags on top of balls, caps and umbrellas make up the prize package for the tourney.

PacSports is conducting contests in driving, putting and chipping to spice up the competitions.

VICTORY IN MALAYSIA

RP karter tops Asian Open



BUMGARNER: "I'm really happy."

LANGKAWI, Malaysia—Michelle Bumgarner of M&M Racing did the Philippines proud when she emerged the overall champion in the 2003 Asian Karting Open Championships at the Langkawi Circuit here.

The 15-year-old Bumgarner amassed a total of 90 points in the three-leg series sanctioned by the CIK/FIA to clinch the premiere Junior International Continental-A crown.

Way ahead by 22 points going into the final leg, Bumgarner copped the kickoff leg at the Sentul Circuit in Jakarta, Indonesia and ended second in the Manila leg held at the Carmona Circuit Philippines last October.

"It was a hard struggle in the championship leg. But I'm really happy for winning this event. This is for my countrymen," said Bumgarner.

She submitted the fastest time of 1:02.011 in Friday's time trials and swept all three qualifying heats the following day, assuring herself of the pole position in the pre-final race.

However, her engine failed to start right away due to carburator problems, pushing her at the back of the pack. But that didn't let her spirits down as she immediately caught up with her rivals and snatched fifth place.

Then in the final race, she quickly went up fourth and jacked up a 1:02.221 on the seventh lap to check in second behind compatriot Matteo Guidicelli of Team Cebu-CRG.

With her feat, she will move up to the Open class in next year's edition of the Asian Zone Karting Championship.

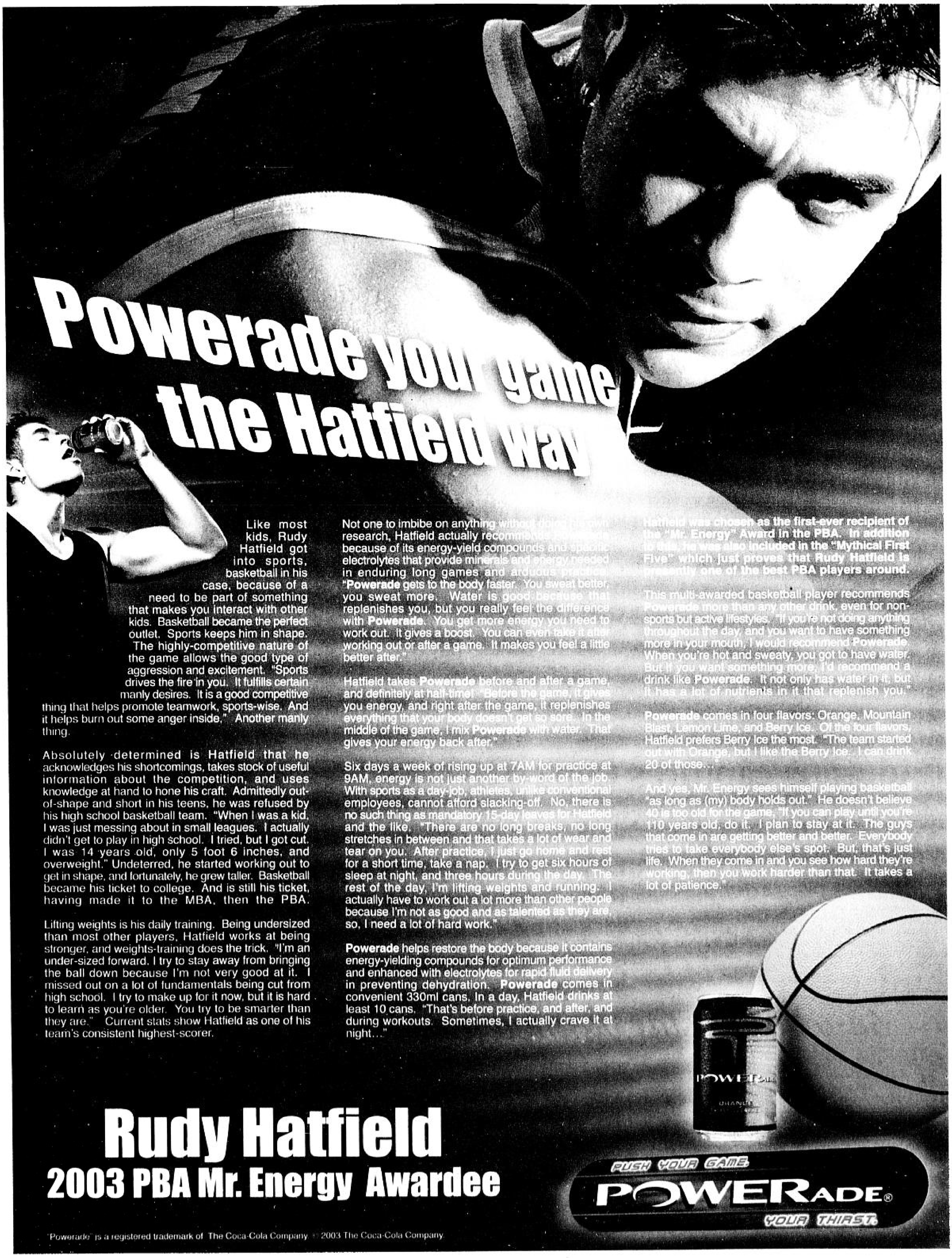
Trinidad golf at Villamor

THE FIRST Pasay City Mayor Peewee Trinidad Golf Classic will be held on March 26, 2004 at the Villamor Golf Club.

Trinidad said the golfest would be held to raise funds for city residents who need them most.

Heading the guests at the launch were tournament co-chairmen Felix T. Amante Jr. and Gen. Charlie Tanega and members Gen. Francisco Atayde, Comm.Danny Pizaro and Freddie Mendoza.

Completing the tournament committee members are Villamor general manager Gen. Bert Sabularse, tournament director Fred Suarez, Peter Ruebenfeldt (secretariat), Edgardo Rubia (finance); Jake Ayson and Toos Aquino (rules), Taby Tabaniag, Al Mendoza and Roger Flores (publicity), Francis Siasat (programs and entertainment) and Nilo Fuentebella (awards and prizes). A maximum field of 200 is tipped to join the event.



Powerade your game the Hatfield way

Like most kids, Rudy Hatfield got into sports, basketball in his case, because of a need to be part of something that makes you interact with other kids. Basketball became the perfect outlet. Sports keeps him in shape. The highly-competitive nature of the game allows the good type of aggression and excitement. "Sports drives the fire in you. It fulfills certain manly desires. It is a good competitive thing that helps promote teamwork, sports-wise. And it helps burn out some anger inside." Another manly thing.

Absolutely determined is Hatfield that he acknowledges his shortcomings, takes stock of useful information about the competition, and uses knowledge at hand to hone his craft. Admittedly out-of-shape and short in his teens, he was refused by his high school basketball team. "When I was a kid, I was just messing about in small leagues. I actually didn't get to play in high school. I tried, but I got cut. I was 14 years old, only 5 foot 6 inches, and overweight." Undeterred, he started working out to get in shape, and fortunately, he grew taller. Basketball became his ticket to college. And is still his ticket, having made it to the MBA, then the PBA.

Lifting weights is his daily training. Being undersized than most other players, Hatfield works at being stronger, and weights-training does the trick. "I'm an under-sized forward. I try to stay away from bringing the ball down because I'm not very good at it. I missed out on a lot of fundamentals being cut from high school. I try to make up for it now, but it is hard to learn as you're older. You try to be smarter than they are." Current stats show Hatfield as one of his team's consistent highest-scorer.

Not one to imbibe on anything without doing his own research, Hatfield actually recommends Powerade because of its energy-yield compounds and specific electrolytes that provide minerals and energy needed in enduring long games and arduous practice. "**Powerade** gets to the body faster. You sweat better, you sweat more. Water is good because that replenishes you, but you really feel the difference with **Powerade**. You get more energy you need to work out. It gives a boost. You can even take it after working out or after a game. It makes you feel a little better after."

Hatfield takes **Powerade** before and after a game, and definitely at half-time! "Before the game, it gives you energy, and right after the game, it replenishes everything that your body doesn't get so sore. In the middle of the game, I mix **Powerade** with water. That gives your energy back after."

Six days a week of rising up at 7AM for practice at 9AM, energy is not just another by-word of the job. With sports as a day-job, athletes, unlike conventional employees, cannot afford slacking-off. No, there is no such thing as mandatory 15-day leaves for Hatfield and the like. "There are no long breaks, no long stretches in between and that takes a lot of wear and tear on you. After practice, I just go home and rest for a short time, take a nap. I try to get six hours of sleep at night, and three hours during the day. The rest of the day, I'm lifting weights and running. I actually have to work out a lot more than other people because I'm not as good and as talented as they are, so, I need a lot of hard work."

Powerade helps restore the body because it contains energy-yielding compounds for optimum performance and enhanced with electrolytes for rapid fluid delivery in preventing dehydration. **Powerade** comes in convenient 330ml cans. In a day, Hatfield drinks at least 10 cans. "That's before practice, and after, and during workouts. Sometimes, I actually crave it at night..."

Hatfield was chosen as the first-ever recipient of the "Mr. Energy" Award in the PBA. In addition to this, he was also included in the "Mythical First Five" which just proves that Rudy Hatfield is presently one of the best PBA players around.

This multi-awarded basketball player recommends **Powerade** more than any other drink, even for non-sports but active lifestyles. "If you're not doing anything throughout the day, and you want to have something more in your mouth, I would recommend **Powerade**. When you're hot and sweaty, you got to have water. But if you want something more, I'd recommend a drink like **Powerade**. It not only has water in it, but it has a lot of nutrients in it that replenish you."

Powerade comes in four flavors: Orange, Mountain Blast, Lemon Lime, and Berry Ice. Of the four flavors, Hatfield prefers Berry Ice the most. "The team started out with Orange, but I like the Berry Ice. I can drink 20 of those..."

And yes, Mr. Energy sees himself playing basketball "as long as (my) body holds out." He doesn't believe 40 is too old for the game, "If you can play until you're 110 years old, do it. I plan to stay at it. The guys that come in are getting better and better. Everybody tries to take everybody else's spot. But, that's just life. When they come in and you see how hard they're working, then you work harder than that. It takes a lot of patience."

Rudy Hatfield
2003 PBA Mr. Energy Awardee

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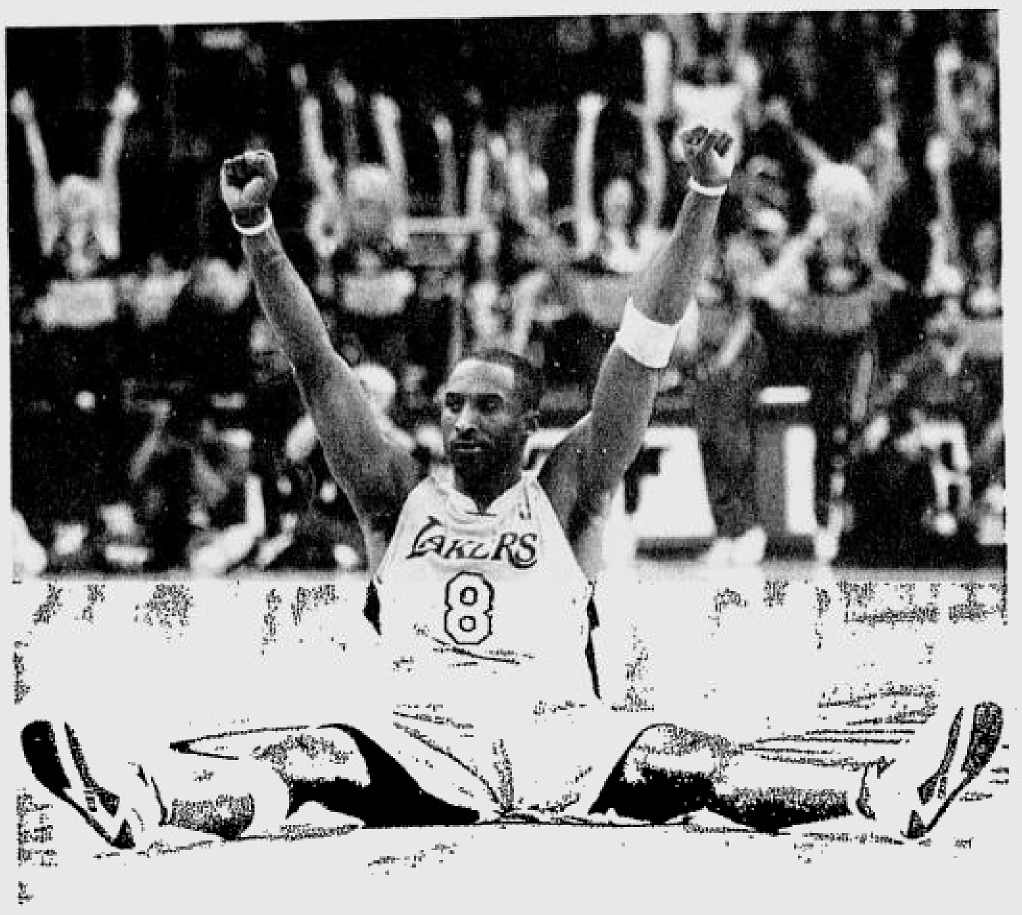
NBA ROUNDUP

Cavs end 34-game road slide as LeBron sizzles



BRYANT raises his arms after lifting the Lakers to victory. AP

Kobe hits winning shot for LA Lakers

PHILADELPHIA—LeBron James ended Cleveland's 34-game road losing streak with his best shooting performance yet.

James made five 3-pointers and scored 36 points, leading the Cavaliers to an 88-81 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers on Friday night for Cleveland's first away win since Jan. 12 at Seattle.

Cleveland's road losing streak tied for the second-longest in NBA history behind Sacramento's 43-game streak in the 1990-91 and 1991-92 seasons. New Jersey also had a 34-game streak in the 1989-90 and 1990-91 campaigns.

James finished 14-of-24, including 5-of-7 from 3-point range. He made all three of his freethrows and had four rebounds and five assists.

In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant hit a 21-foot (6-5-meter) jump shot at the buzzer after arriving late from a court hearing in Colorado as Los Angeles edged the Nuggets, 101-99.

Bryant took the inbounds pass from Devean George, drove left, pump-faked defender Jon Barry off his feet and sank the winning jumper from the top of the key before falling on his rear end. He was mobbed by teammates, and the crowd that had welcomed him with a loud ovation at the start of the second quarter went wild.

Shaquille O'Neal had 26 points, 11 rebounds and made 10 of 17 freethrows to help the Lakers end a two-game losing streak. They are 13-1 at Staples Center.

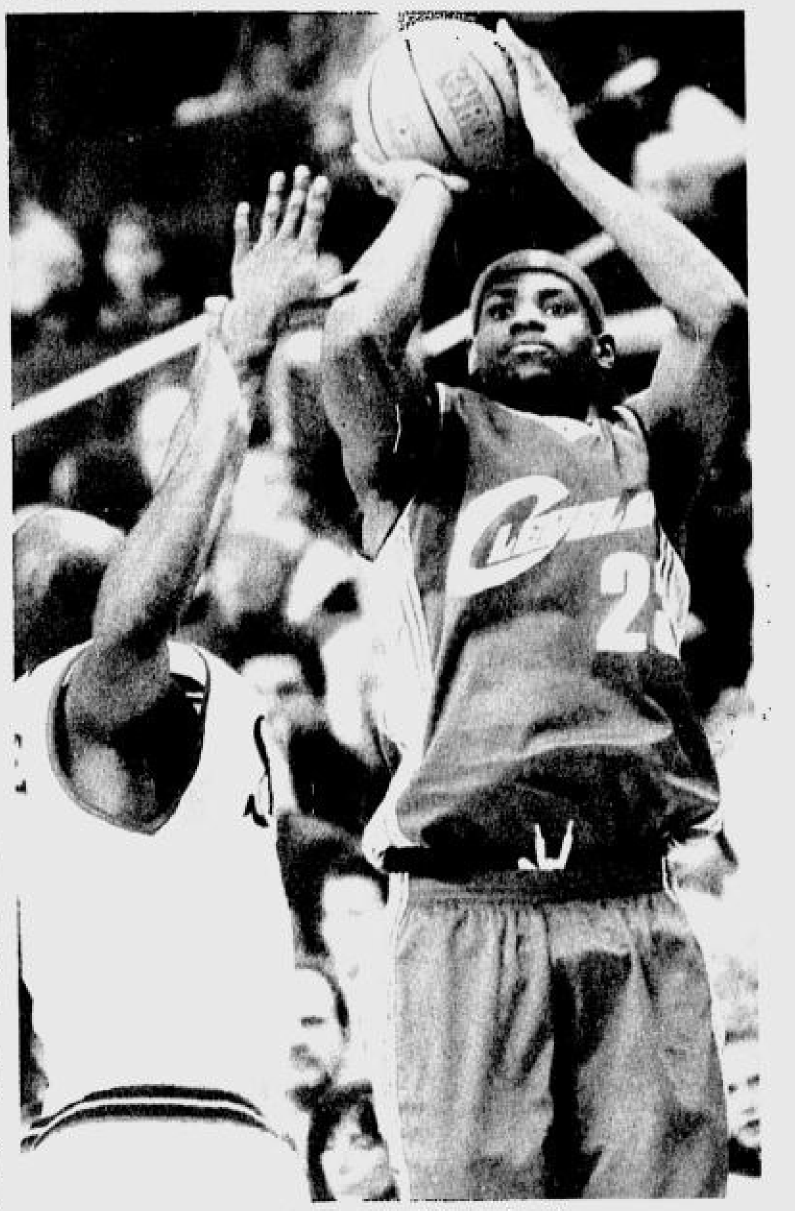
Bryant finished with 13 points and five assists in 31 minutes after missing the first quarter.

In Orlando, Florida, Tracy McGrady had 29 points and a season-high 12 assists in leading the resurgent Orlando Magic to their largest victory margin of the season, 119-93.

Drew Gooden added a season-best 25 points and 13 rebounds off the bench for his seventh double-double of the month. *AP*

Complete results:

Orlando 119, Golden State 93; Cleveland 88, Philadelphia 81; Toronto 105, New York 99 (OT); Sacramento 98, Atlanta 86; New Jersey 97, Washington 87; Utah 99, Boston 96; Indiana 80, Detroit 75; Memphis 97, Miami 83; Houston 99, LA Clippers 85; San Antonio 87, Seattle 73; LA Lakers 101, Denver 99.



JAMES shoots over Philadelphia guard Aaron McKie. REUTERS

'Zo' undergoes kidney transplant

NEW YORK—Seven-time All-Star Alonzo "Zo" Mourning was undergoing kidney transplant surgery in New York on Friday, his agent said.

Mourning, who retired from the NBA last month with a kidney disease, is receiving a new kidney from an unidentified member of his family, reported by the New York Times to be a cousin.

"Alonzo will receive his kidney from a family member and wants to thank all those who offered to donate a kidney to him for their generosity," Mourning's agent, Jeff Wechsler, said in a statement.

"He appreciates the well wishes and encouragement he's received from fans all around the world and asks that the public respect his privacy." Wechsler said he did not know how long the procedure would take. Mourning is expected to remain in hospital for five to seven days.

Mourning was inundated with donor offers when he announced in November that he would no longer be able to play for the New Jersey Nets, his third team in a career dating back to 1992.

The 33-year-old center suffers from focal segmental glomerulosclerosis, or FSGS, and was diagnosed with the condition before the 2000-01 season. *Reuters*

Judge in Bryant case sends witnesses home

KOBE (left) with his attorney, Pamela Mackey AP

EAGLE, Colorado—Putting off testimony at a key hearing in the Kobe Bryant case, the trial judge sent witnesses home Friday and met privately with attorneys arguing over whether to allow as evidence the medical history of the woman accusing the NBA star of rape.

The outcome of the issue before state District Judge Terry Ruckriegle could play a huge role at trial: The defense hopes to argue the woman had mental problems that could have clouded her perception of what happened between the two in a Colorado hotel room last June.

Bryant, 25, has insisted they had consensual sex.

Ruckriegle asked attorneys on both sides to spell out in briefs due on Jan. 9 whether the medical history should be allowed. The issue will be taken up again at a Jan. 23 hearing.

"I want the opportunity to reflect on it," he said.

David Lugert, a defense attorney and former prosecutor, said the trial's slow pace suggested a long paper fight was coming.

"The case is going sideways," Lugert said.

Prosecutors and attorneys for the woman say her medical history should remain out of public view. They urged the judge to hold any arguments about the issue behind closed doors, and he agreed.

Among those subpoenaed by the defense to appear Friday were the accuser's mother and a former friend, Lindsey McKinney, who has said the woman tried to kill herself twice this year.

The woman's father, who was not subpoenaed, spent the day sitting in the gallery, 6 meters (20 feet) away from Bryant. *AP*

Underdog captures Copa

AREQUIPA, Peru—Cienciano's Carlos Lubo sent a free shot through a wall of River Plate defenders to upset the Argentine club and win the Copa Sudamericana Friday, delivering the nation its first-ever international club title.

The Paraguayan defender's right-footed rocket came in the 77th minute of play, sending River goalkeeper Franco Costanzo diving to his left—and a stadium of underdog Cienciano supporters, "the Red Fury," to their feet.

A humiliating defeat for River, the victory made instant national soccer heroes out of the underdog Cienciano club, a small-time team from Peru's provinces.

River opened strong, dominating the first period and surprising Cienciano with star striker Marcelo Salas attacking up the center and Maximiliano Lopez coming in from the sides.

River's Marcelo Gallardo got the first solid shot on goal in the 23rd minute, followed by dangerous attempts by Daniel Montenegro two minutes later and Luis Gonzalez with two minutes remaining in the first period.

River was unable to find the net, however, and Cienciano ran the Argentines into the ground in the second period. The Peruvian club ended the match with nine players after the expulsion of midfielders Juan Carlos La Rosa and Julio Garcia. *AP*

Brazil booters cop 4th Youth diadem

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates—Brazil won the World Youth Championship for the fourth time Friday, beating 10-man Spain, 1-0, on a header by substitute Fernandinho.

In the third-place game, Colombia defeated defending champion Argentina, 2-1.

Minutes after Fernandinho's 87th-minute clincher, off a corner kick from teammate Daniel, he was sent off for receiving his second yellow card in two games.

But Brazil played down the clock to defeat the brave Spanish team, which played with 10 men from the 4th minute after Italian referee Roberto Rosetti issued a red card against defender Melli.

Melli dragged down Brazilian striker Nilmar, who was streaming toward the Spanish goal and set to pounce on a long pass from teammate Daniel Carvalho.

"It should have been a yellow card because there was no danger of him (Nilmar) scoring," an angry Spain coach Jose Ufarte said. "Brazil is a very good team but they were lucky to have that decision that helped them win the game."

Ufarte would not comment when asked if he would protest the refereeing display by Rosetti, who issued four yellow cards to Spain and two to Brazil. "There were some strange decisions made," Ufarte added.

When asked if Melli deserved to be sent off by Rosetti, Brazil coach Marcos Paqueta replied: "It was a very severe decision.

"We are happy with the win but it was not our best performance of the tournament," Paqueta added. "I expected more from Brazil after the expulsion (of Melli), but when we play against a team with 10 players we tend to have some difficulties."

With the 55,000-strong crowd expecting Brazil to exploit its advantage, the Spaniards upped their defensive workrate and constantly harried their South American opponents. When in possession, Spain's midfield, led by FC Barcelona's Iniesta and Atletico Madrid's Gabi, was fast on the break and created many scoring opportunities.

The victory tied Brazil with Argentina for the most world under-20 championships. *AP*

BRAZIL captain Adailton raises the championship trophy. AP

Manchester star banned for 8 months

FERDINAND

LONDON—Manchester United soccer star Rio Ferdinand was suspended for eight months and ruled out of Euro 2004 on Friday after he was found guilty of failing to take a drug test.

A three-man Football Association disciplinary committee found the world's most expensive defender guilty of a misconduct charge. He was also fined 50,000 pounds (US$87,000).

Manchester United, describing the sentence as "savage and unprecedented," said an appeal was "inevitable" and the players' union leader described the sentence as "draconian."

By contrast, Dick Pound, chairman of the World Anti-Doping Agency says Ferdinand was lucky not to get a longer ban.

The suspension begins from Jan. 12 next year which means he won't be available to play for England at the June 12-July 4 European Championships in Portugal.

Unless he wins the appeal, he will also miss Manchester United's campaigns in both the Premier League and European Champions League. Ferdinand, a 30-million pound (US$52.2 million) centerback who is due to face Tottenham in a league game on Sunday, has 14 days to lodge the appeal.

In a case closely watched by Fifa and Wada, Ferdinand was accused of either failing or refusing to provide a sample when a drug test team went to United's training center Sept. 23.

Ferdinand said at the time that he "forgot" to take the test while he was moving house. Although he tested negative two days later, the fact that he failed to give a sample is regarded as serious as testing positive.

The verdict was announced by Nick Barron, spokesperson for the independent commission after their two-day meeting at Bolton's Reebok Stadium.

"The disciplinary commission unanimously found the charge was proved against Rio Ferdinand," he told reporters. *AP*

BATTLE IN BALANGA

Lunas TKOs Thai challenger

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

BALANGA, Bataan—Rolly Lunas stopped Thai Phises Vor Surapol in the sixth round Friday night to retain his Pan-Asia Boxing Association flyweight title in the mainer of the "Battle in Balanga 3" at the People's gym here.

Using superior lateral movement and precise jabbing, Lunas put the Thai away for good 58 seconds into the sixth of their scheduled 12-rounder.

Lunas started the bout with a lead-off right, stunned the challenger in the second round, then continued the momentum through round five against the game and show-boating Thai, who would bang his gloves each time he got tagged by the Filipino.

In the sixth, a Lunas right straight landed flush on Surapol's left cheek, sending the visitor down on all fours.

Although he beat the count, Lunas pinned him on a neutral corner this time.

After absorbing a series of unanswered shots from Lunas, referee Ferdinand Estrella stopped the fight even as ringside physician Naseer Cruz immediately came to the aid of the Thai.

Bataan Gov. Leonardo "Ding" Roman, assisted by GAB Commissioner Emmanuel Palabrica and promoter Lope "Jun" Sarreal, awarded the championship belt to Lunas.

"I hope everybody enjoyed this very explosive show tonight. This is a good start in our effort to make the youth realize the value of sports," said Roman, adding that a public library will be built from the proceeds of the event.

In the chief supporting fight, Philippine lightweight champion Fernando Montilla registered his most impressive win so far, stopping top-ranked Larry Pelonia in 1:08 of the third round of this battle of southpaws.

Montilla, who was defending his 135-lb title, worked behind a great jab, then used combinations capped by a wicked right hook to down Pelonia for good.

BATAAN Gov. Ding Roman raises the hands of Lunas. SALVEN LAGUMBAY

Garcia, Dizon subdue rivals

CARMONA, Cavite—Raffy Garcia and Maurice Dizon came up with sterling performances to capture the overall gross and net championship, respectively, in the Chairman's Cup of the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club recently.

Sharing the spotlight with them were the winners of the major raffle prizes—worth about P2 million—led by Stephen Liao, who won a brand-new Mitsubishi Lancer courtesy of Mitsubishi Motors Philippines, and Frederico Campos, who will fly business class to Miami via Northwest Airlines then go on a Royal Caribbean International Cruise for two.

W.S. Park, on the other hand, will enjoy his Bangkok golf tour package from Thai Airways and William Chua now heads to the golf course with his golf set from Wilson Sports.

Britesmile, Camp John Hay Development Corp., Club Leisure Management, Kork Inc., Miramar Tuna Belly, Nestlé Philippines, Smart Communications and Vein Care are the other sponsors of the tournament.

Aguilar is first Filipino Asian Supercross champion

For the first time in history, the Philippine flag was hoisted in the FIM Asian Supercross.

Credit goes to Caltex-Revtex Namssa star rider Glenn Aguilar, who formalized his claim to Asia's most prestigious motocross title with a tactical ride in the final leg of the FIM event at Yigo International Raceway Park, Guam, USA.

Aguilar, who was appointed by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association headed by Ken Falco to represent the Philippines, clinched the FIM's Asia-Pacific 125cc crown by virtue of his overwhelming points margin over second-running Aep Dadang of Indonesia.

He bucked a spill in the qualifying 125cc race and still placed 2nd behind Australian rider Jye Harvey and then unleashed a calculated ride in the finals where he ranked 3rd to the Aussie and Hawaii's Bronson Hethcote. In both races, Aguilar had the best lap times of 51.167 and 50.928.

At the end of the race, Aguilar, knowing that he had snared the As-Pac title, unplugged the Philippine flag on display near the podium and waved it around the race track for one final victory ride.

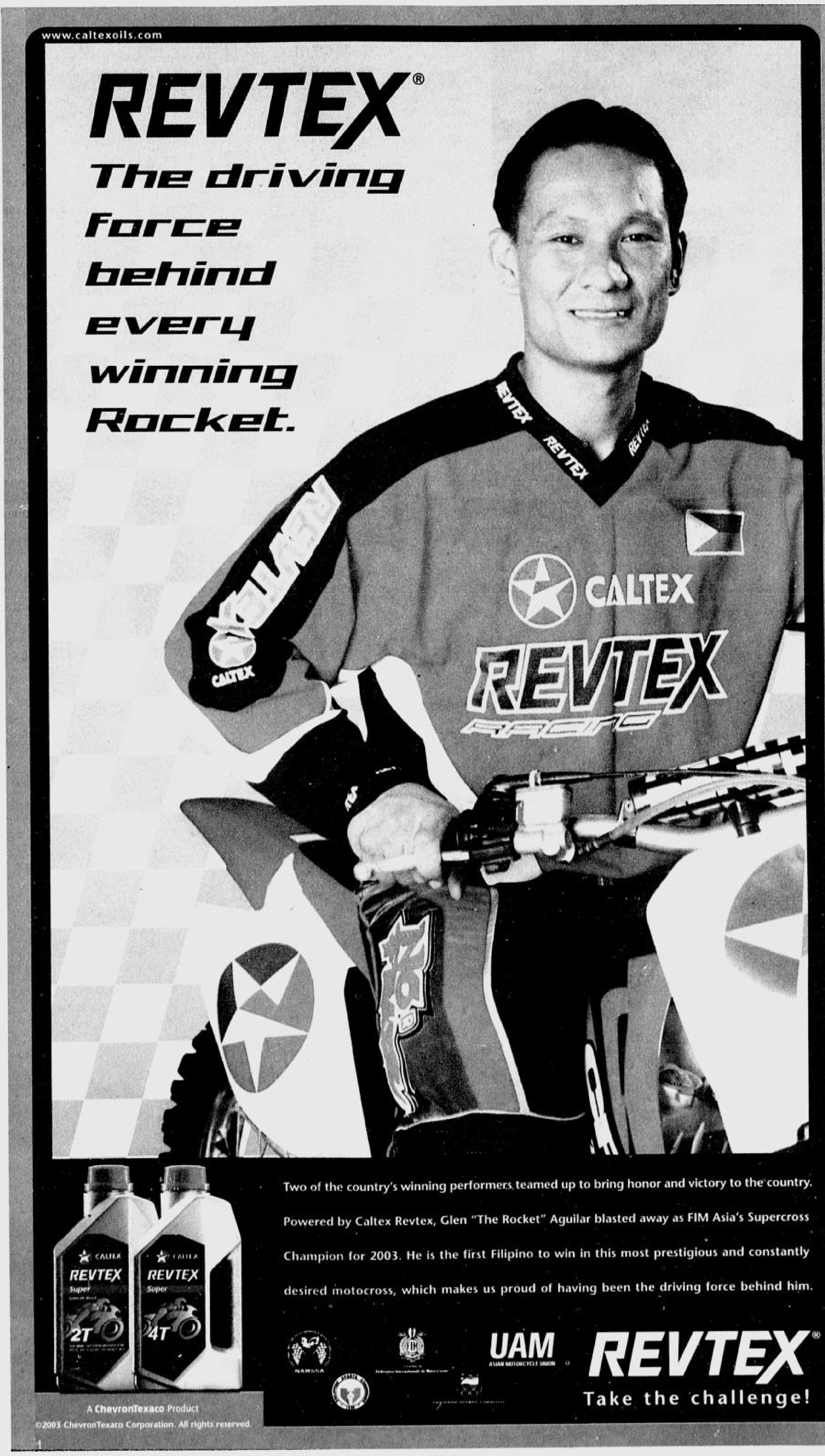
"I am very happy to win the overall series and glad to be the first Filipino to win the much-coveted Asian Motocross Championship. Waving the Philippine flag inside the track after the race is such an overwhelming experience for me," said Aguilar.

With Aguilar's victory, coupled by Kenneth San Andres' stunning first-place win in the final leg, the Philippines also snared the Coupe Des Nations Asiatique 2003, the coveted prize awarded to the country of origin of the winning riders.

"After Manny Pacquiao and Dorothy Delasin, it's now the turn of Aguilar to bring honor to the country in foreign soil. We should all be proud of his achievement because it was won through hard work," said Revtex team manager Ner Marquez Dormiendo, who accompanied the riders to the Guam meet, with another Caltex manager Paul Familara and UAM president Macky Carapiet.

Together with Caltex Revtex, Aguilar was fully supported by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (NAMSSA) all season of whom is affiliated with the FIM, POC (Philippine Olympic Committee) and the (PSC) Philippine Sports Commission.

ADVT



Two of the country's winning performers teamed up to bring honor and victory to the country. Powered by Caltex Revtex, Glen "The Rocket" Aguilar blasted away as FIM Asia's Supercross Champion for 2003. He is the first Filipino to win in this most prestigious and constantly desired motocross, which makes us proud of having been the driving force behind him.

REVTEX®
Take the challenge!

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Empire King eyes Juvenile title today

EMPIRE King aims to officially crown himself as the year's undisputed 2-year-old champion when he sets out as top pick in the 2003 Philracom Juvenile Championship at the Santa Ana Park.

The classy colt previously won the Juvenile Colt titles in the Philtobo Mitra Cup, Marho Breeders' Cup and the Wind Blown Racefest.

Sired by Perfect Halo (USA) out of Carta Nueve (NZ), Empire King is currently on a five-race winning streak and is gunning to sweep the year's Juvenile Stakes Series under regular skipper Jeffrey Ladiana.

The David Lee-owned and Ernesto Roxas-trained Empire King, however, is expected to encounter stiff resistance in the one-mile event.

Leading the challengers is Paolo Mendoza's Don Paolo, who will try to get back at Empire King. He will be handled by Pat Dilema.

Also vying for the P600,000 top prize are Speed O'War, Cover Girl, Toril, Flying Jordan, Nothing to Declare, Shock and Awe, Terminator, Vindicated, Batangas Force and Banana Split.

The race, with a total pot of P1.67 million, is sponsored by the Philippine Racing Commission under chair Jaime Dilag.

Four other featured races—the P500,000 "Alay sa Pangulo" Invitational Race, the P400,000 Philracom Juvenile Hopeful Stakes and two Imported Invitationals—are also on tap for the day.

The entries in the 1,600-meter "Alay sa Pangulo" are Dandansoy, Hazmoore, War Hero and Hyperbid, as well as, imports Bag Girl, Revolting, Crystal Show and Surprise Target.

War Hero, owned by John Mendoza, will try to repeat over Dandansoy whom he edged in last week's Hopeful Stakes.

Battling in the P1,500-meter Juvenile Hopeful are Stallone, I Love This Game, Commodore Tiger, Sweet Talk, Angie Gray and Sambat.

A total of 15 races are lined up for today. The day's first race starts at exactly 1 p.m.

EMPIRE King: Hot favorite

JESS YUSON

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1--1. Black Gold 2. Light of My Life 3. Daytona
Race 2--1. Cartada Nueve 2. Binibini 3. Il Amorosa 4. Never Enough
Race 3--1. Mr. Yentau 2. Zarsuela 3. Solo Singer 4. Tropical Sun/Music is Love 5. Sakura Ijhay
Race 4--1. Jade Louise 2. Throttle 3. Hanluchova
Race 5--1. The Warrior 2. Risk Taker 3. Pride of Mandaue 4. Duces Tecum 5. Boys Town Kid
Race 6--1. Ouźo 2. Catwalk Pia 3. Cosanne
Race 7--1. Iverson 2. Snake Snake Snake 3. Exchange Deal 4. Tervalac
Race 8--1. Twin Brother 2. Aminin 3. Husay Na 4. Super Dancer 5. Valentine Dancer
Race 9--1. Don Paolo 2. Empire King 3. Vindicated 4. Flying Jordan 5. Cover Girl
Race 10--1. Speed Battle 2. Real Gem 3. College Gem 4. Hurricane Doding 5. Wing Commander
Race 11--1. I Love This Game 2. Stallone 3. Sambat
Race 12--1. Pullan Beauty 2. Western Dancer 3. Gigi's Gold 4. Sovereign Queen
Race 13--1. War Hero 2. Dandansoy 3. Crystal Show
Race 14--1. Adam's Call 2. Velocity 3. Harry's Up 4. L'Islet Sur Mer
Race 15--1. Compañero 2. Ahead of Time 3. Sexy Royal 4. Roppongi 5. Hurry King 6. Rose and Toy

A new star rises

ONE WINNER

Edwin Villanueva

A NEW star has risen over the local racing horizon.

By winning the recent Presidential Gold Cup, Red Star Rising has suddenly become the talk of the *bayang karerista*.

And there couldn't be any happier fellow than Francis Trillana Jr., the former Philracom commissioner whose son Michael owns the track darling of the moment.

"The victory was a great lift for the family spirits, most especially Michael, who has been through so much lately," Francis told us.

Red Star Rising's win came at a time when Michael was still mourning the death of his first-born child whom he and wife Kate named Angelito.

"He's an angel on our side. He probably helped Red Star Rising to prevail," said Michael. "I'll cherish this victory forever."

The Trillanas are newcomers in the sport but Francis said they have been in it long enough to realize "this is a very humbling game."

He also thanked us for coming out "with a nice, heart-warming story" on Red Star Rising's win which, as usual, was read by racing fans only in the PDI. (You're welcome, sir, *trabaho natin 'yan*).

Francis added that in the post Wind Blown era, the major stakes events will be wide open and they're happy they won the "big race."

"We do have a lot of confidence on Red Star Rising. He's powerfully built, he's all heart and has an impeccable pedigree for classic distances. It's only now that he's hitting his stride," he said of the 3-year-old chestnut colt who snatched the PGC under veteran Manolito "Buchoy" Daquis.

Red Star Rising's sire is Khozaam, a son of the great Seattle Slew out of Par Excellance. Other Khozaam progenies who made big waves here include imported champion Terribly True, top sprinter Jaguar and the classy Security Master, who passed away just recently.

Ito's Choice, the dam of Red Star Rising, is by Clear Choice (USA) out of the New Zealand mare Mulsanne by Imperial March. A former stakes winner here, Ito's Choice was named by Jose "Bebo" Quiros after his youngest son, Joselito.

So what's next for Red Star Rising?

Francis said they will enter him in the Philracom Classic Open on Dec. 28.

"With all those superb imports around, this will be an even tougher race. But you never know, *baka makasilat ulit tayo*," he said.

***

One of the first horse owners who congratulated the Trillanas following Red Star Rising's win in the PGC was prominent sportsman Hermie Esguerra.

In case you don't know, Francis Trillana had previously told Hermie in jest, "*Iurong mo na si* Wind Blown *sa* Gold Cup *para magkaroon naman kami ng pag-asa.*"

My Silip Boy said Francis and the other owners have probably felt that their galloppers would have nary a chance had Hermie fielded his "pambato" in the country's most prestigious race.

A true gentleman that he is, Hermie decided to make the recent Marho Breeders' Cup Classic as Wind Blown's final race and eventually announced the horse's retirement to stud. No more PGC.

"I know Francis was sincere in his request and I admire him for that," said Hermie. "Again, *binabati ko ang* Trillana family *sa magandang panalo ni* Red Star Rising."

***

This is the time of the year when we salute our friends who keep horse racing and local sports going:

Hermie Esguerra, Putch Puyat, Rudy Mendoza, Sandy Javier, Jimmy Dilag, Manny Viray, Koko Cayco, Paolo Mendoza, Francis Trillana Jr., Rudy Prado, Eddie Jose, Vergel Cruz, Go Teng Kok, Eric Buhain, Ali Atienza, Tac Padilla;

Nestor Manalang, Nick Atienza, Johnny Sordan, Bojie Fernandez, Bong Guce, Dhunoy Raquel Jr., Badjao Recosana, Bornok Borbe, Jeff Zarate, Jeh Guce, Ceferino "Howie" Basilio, Andy Sevilla, Ira Herrera, Vince Trinidad, Arman Gonzales, WHIP's Jenny, Galman, Jonathan, Dennis, Rod, Per and Ka Edong;

Bobok Domingo Jr., Ching Vicente, Jovy and Marie Mamawal, Cantada family and of course, the *bayang karerista*.

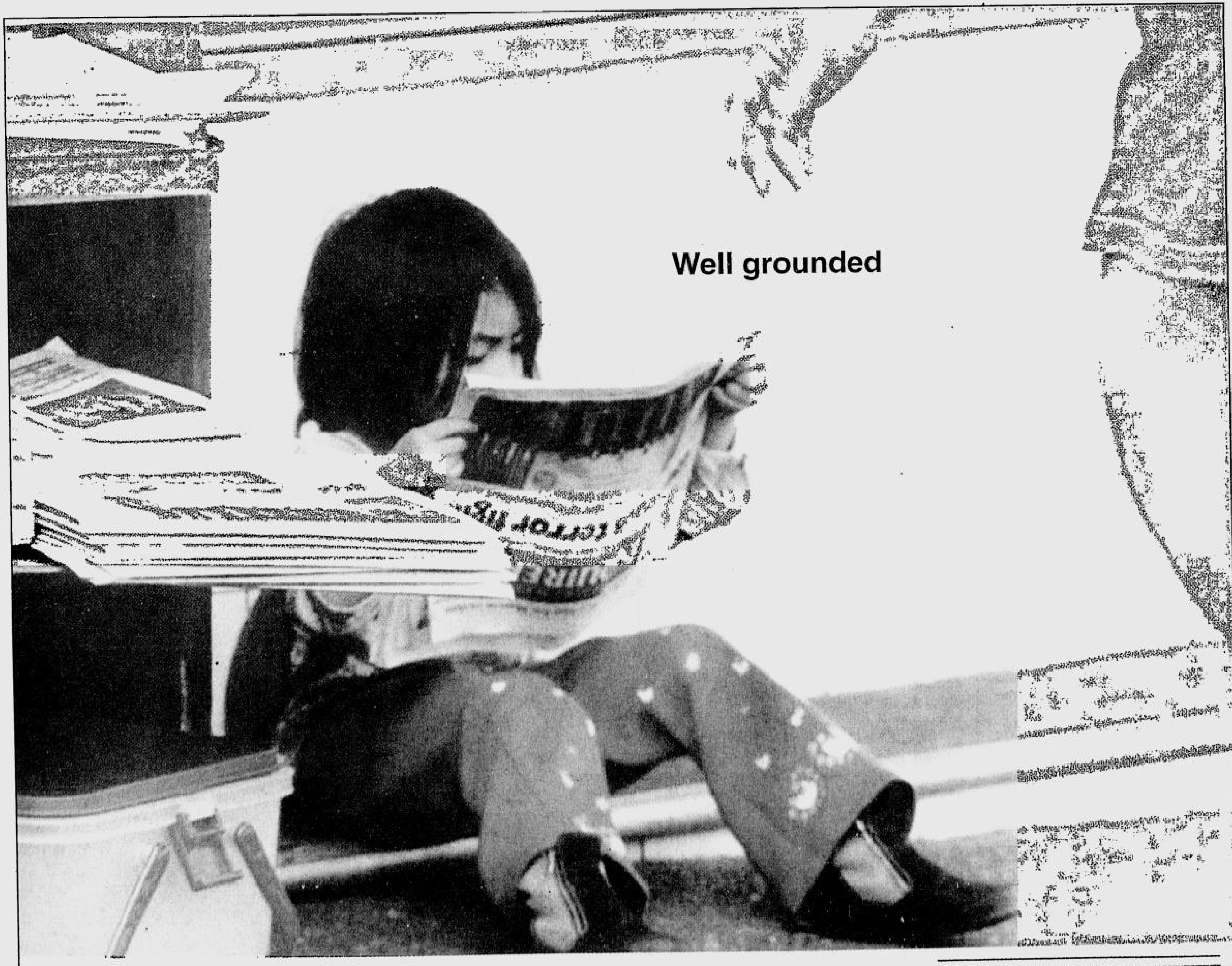
Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all of you!

***

The 6th Philtobo Horse Show will be held starting at 1 p.m. tomorrow (Dec. 22) at the Santa Ana Park. A total of 105 yearlings are nominated, including a half sister to champion galloper Wind Blown. Everyone is invited.

***

E-mail One Winner at evillanueva@inquirer.com.ph or edongvilla@yahoo.com



For the past 9 years, the Philippine Daily Inquirer has topped the Asia Research Organization Readership Survey as the No.1 broadsheet in the country. This year, we've done it again, thanks to the faith of our readers, advertisers, dealers, and partners who remain confident in our commitment to public service. We're glad that whatever your reading style, you have made us a part of your life.

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2 CABIN FEVER
3 ALIPIN
4 THE GRUDGE
5 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
6 LOST ISLAND
7 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
8 MYSTIC RIVER

SM CITY CEBU
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1 DARK BLUE
2 GOOD BOY!
3 SCARY MOVIE 3
4 RUGRATS GO WILD
5 ELF
6 ZHO YU'S TRAIN
7 THE GRUDGE
8 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

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1 INTERNET QUEEN
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8 LIBERATED

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9 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
10 MR. SUAVE

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2 CABIN FEVER
3 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
4 ELF
5 INTERNET QUEEN
6 ALIPIN
7 MR. SUAVE
8 LOST ISLAND
9 THE GRUDGE
10 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9359749

1 LOST ISLAND
2 SCARY MOVIE 3
3 ALIPIN
4 MYSTIC RIVER
5 MR. SUAVE
6 THE GRUDGE
7 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
8 CABIN FEVER
9 CHAVIT SINGSON
10 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
11 JEANNIE, BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
12 INTERNET QUEEN

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3 ELF
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8 ELF
9 THE GRUDGE
10 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
11 LOST ISLAND
12 LIBERATED

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
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2 LIBERATED
3 MR. SUAVE
4 LOST ISLAND

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2 RESERVED
3 STAR RUNNER
4 COLD CREEK MANOR
5 OUT OF TIME
6 SCARY MOVIE 3
7 RESERVED
8 ELF

SM CITY MANILA
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8 JEANNIE, BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
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4 LOST ISLAND 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
5 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
6 THE GRUDGE 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
7 CHICAGO 10:40, 12:50, 3:00, 5:10, 7:20, 9:30
8 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY 12:05, 2:15, 4:25, 6:30, 9:00
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4 LOTR: FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING - 11:20, 2:50, 6:20, 9:50
5 LOST ISLAND - - 10:10, 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:15, 9:40
6 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 - 11:15, 1:25, 3:40, 5:55, 8:10, 10:00
7 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY - 11:30, 1:40, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:00

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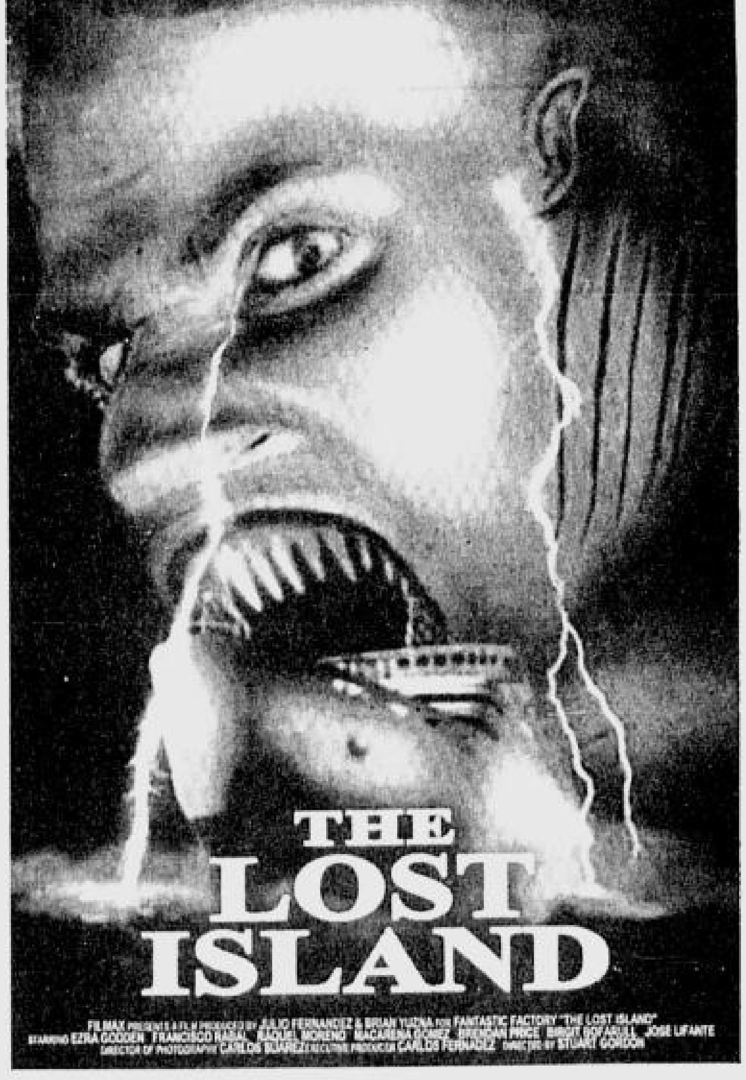

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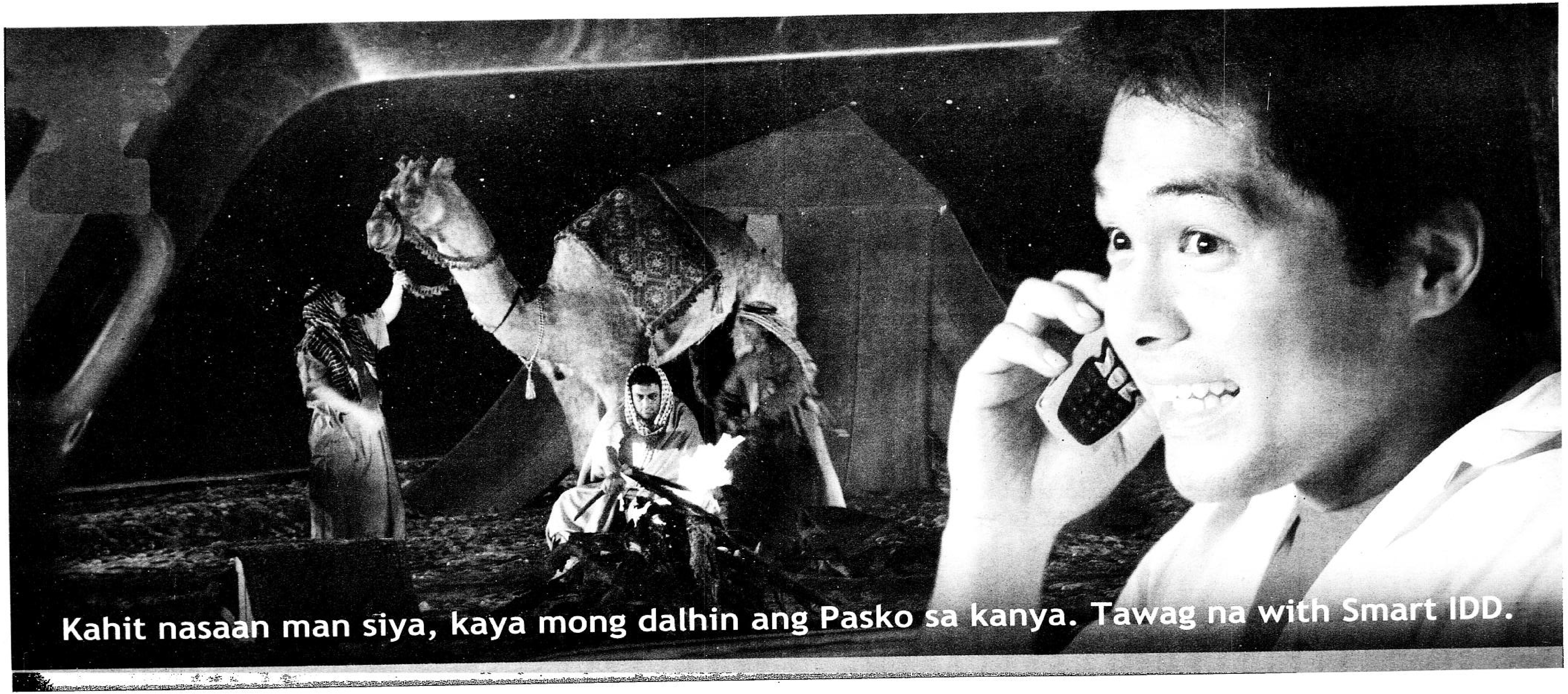
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Business Features Editor **Margie Quimpo-Espino**

Banking's loss is little kids' gain

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

SHE was on her way to building a great career in banking and finance in one of the world's top banks.

But that was not what fate wanted for Helen Castro-Limcaoco.

Her path led to a place where she is on her own and self-employed.

Helen owns the master franchise for The Little Gym in the Philippines. Little Gym is a franchised children's fitness and development center based in Scottsdale, Arizona in the United States.

HELEN graduated magna cum laude in BS Economics from UP Diliman.

The value it brings is that physical growth and development of motor skills have been found to contribute to mental development of children.

Looking back, Helen says she is so glad she got out of banking. Time was when she and her husband were both bankers and all their friends were bankers and Finance graduates.

"It was so boring," she laughs. "I am so glad now I got out and saw the other side—like art appreciation. These are things you don't see and don't have time for when you are in banking."

But the businesswoman that she is now is the result of her learnings from two giant organizations she was involved in.

Menial tasks

There was a time when she was asked to do menial tasks like photocopying documents. This, despite the fact that she graduated magna cum laude in Business Economics from the University of the Philippines.

After college, Helen applied for jobs but her father, lawyer and former Presidential Commission on Good Government chair David Castro, did not like the companies she was applying with. So he got her to apply with SGV & Co. and with her impressive credentials, she was hired as technical staff. Her salary was about P1,250 a month or some P50 a day—an amount that Helen recalls, was the same as her allowance during college. But she says that since she was a magna cum laude, she got P50 more than the P1,200 given to new entrants.

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DURING one of Little Gym's events.

TG and Helen at the New York Metropolitan Museum.

HELEN and husband TG with their kids at Dreamwork in Bangkok. Children's names are Regina, Andres and Patricia.

SGV was a culture shock for the young achiever.

Coming from a school where she was putting in 100 percent effort in studies and extra curricular activities, she suddenly found herself doing insignificant tasks.

"For the first time, no one was dictating. There was no mentor system. For over a year, all I did was photocopy documents," she says.

Break

She got her break from a boss who saw her potential and assigned her more tasks. She was made into a writer of the research papers and reports that had to be submitted to clients. Helen says she likes writing and enjoyed what she was doing.

FIRST JOB

But ever the studious person, Helen quit and pursued a masteral degree and then her MBA at the Wharton School of The University of Pennsylvania.

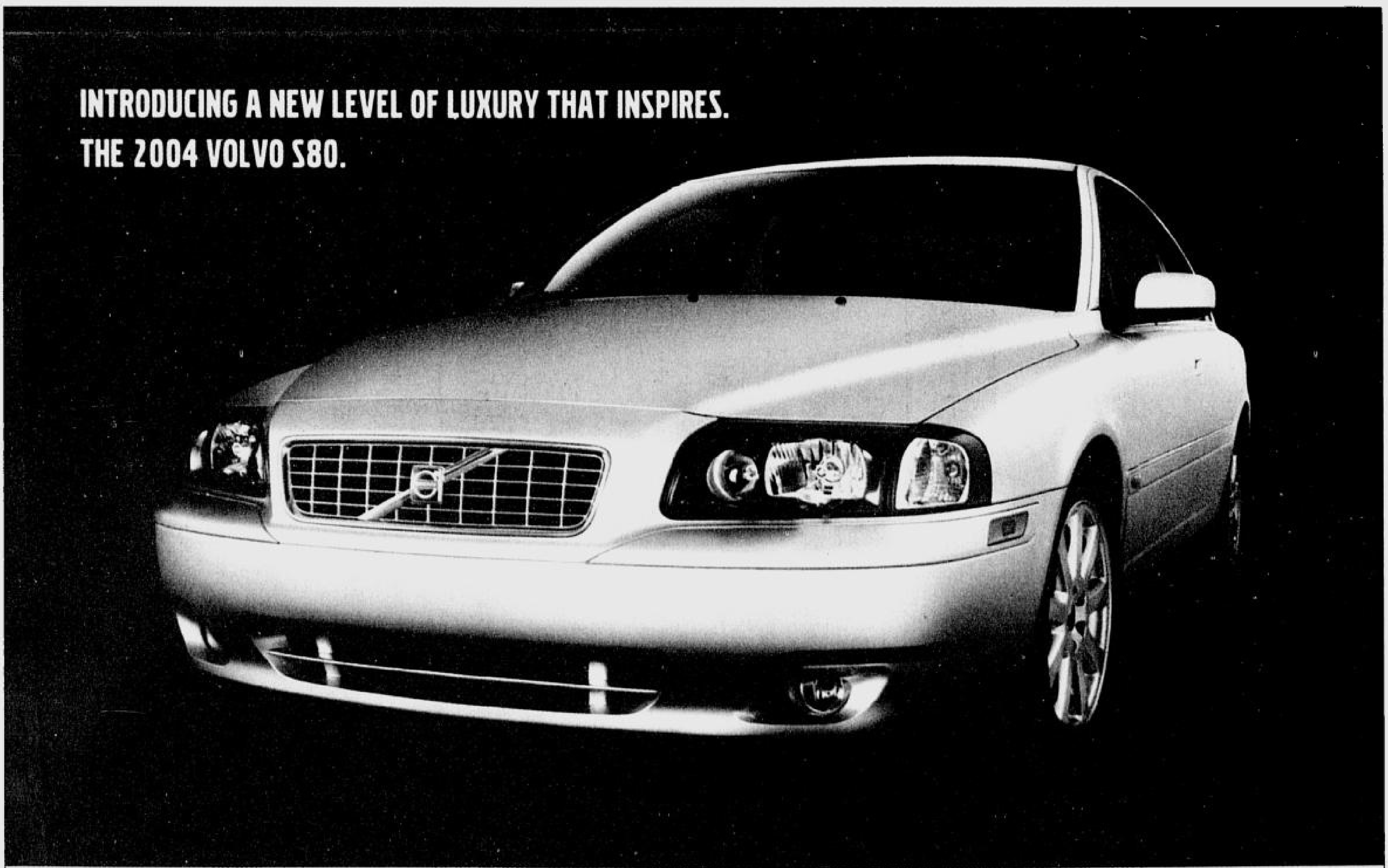
After graduation, she went back to Manila and joined Citibank. She trained in several areas including the Foreign and Local Currency Desks of the Treasury Group, the Treasury Services Operations Unit, the Trade Management Services and Cash Management Services Units of the Transaction Banking Group, and the Control Unit.

In January 1989, she became a product development officer where she participated as a member of the Citicorp/Citibank team involved in lead underwriting the initial public offering of Sanitary Wares Manufacturing Corp., an American Standard Corporation subsidiary.

The transaction was listed among Citibank's Asia Pacific Transaction Milestones.

She also wrote the equity product risk program for Citibank, N.A. Manila, the manual on accounting and risk evaluation procedures for equity products at the bank's Manila branch and acted as project officer-in-charge for the integration of back office operations, and the streamlining of the business policies, risk management and control procedures of Citicorp Vickers to comply with standards imposed by the parent company, Citibank, N.A.

BANKING'S/B2



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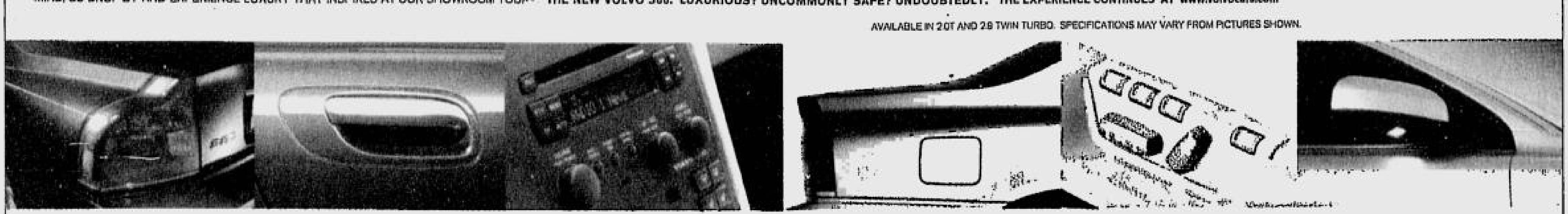

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Banking's loss . . .

From page B1

She also coordinated the debt-to-equity swap transaction providing for an additional $1.1 million capitalization for Citicorp Vickers Philippines.

In April 1990, she was assigned to be the corporate treasurer and account executive of Citicorp Vickers Philippines Inc., and became an associate member of the Makati Stock Exchange.

She developed and maintained client relationships with foreign- and locally-based institutional investors, brokerage houses and fund managers and personally closed transactions valued at over P400 million (in 1991 worth about US $16 million) over a 12-month period, at a time when total stock exchange monthly volume was only around P2.4 billion.

She also negotiated for the stock brokerage company the cross transaction of Sanitary Wares shares worth P168 million (about $6.7 million in 1990), and the successful sale of low turnover stocks to foreign fund managers with a combined value of $3.5 million.

Going on her own

In August 1991 she quit Citibank because of some internal conflicts. She became a contributing editor in the now defunct Manila Inc. business magazine writing a business finance column.

Eventually, Helen went on her on.

When husband TG Limcaoco of the Ayala Group was asked by JP Morgan to set up its derivatives desk for the region, they moved to Singapore. There, Helen set up an events management group and got interested in the arts.

She became a regular buyer of the Tomlinson Collection such that when they went back to Manila, she set up Quartetto Furniture & Furnishings Corp., the exclusive distributor of the Tomlinson Collection.

But at about the same time, she got interested in The Little Gym.

In November 1995, she set up Just for Kids Inc., which holds the Master Franchise in the Philippines of The Little Gym.

Since July 2000, she has been involved with The Little Gym International Inc. as advisor for Asia, providing business consulting services to franchisees in Asia. In July 2002, she set up and cofounded the firm that owns and operates the The Little Gym of Singapore West, the first franchise in Singapore.

She initiated the development of The Little Gym's JUMP-A-ROO, the franchise's middle market brand, in 2002. In 2001, she was given the International Franchise Owner of the Year Award by The Little Gym International in recognition of her contribution to the growth of The Little Gym in Asia.

There are now four Little Gym branches in the Philippines.

Helen admits that if she had not quit Citibank, she would have still been working at a hectic pace. When she was carrying her first child, she would work till midnight when the New York Stock Exchange closed. The following day, she would follow the local exchange and in the afternoon, wait for the London Exchange to open at 4 p.m.

She looks back to what her father told her—"If you're employed you can rise in rank to VP. But who benefits? If you put up your own business, imagine all the families you are supporting. You are creating a multiplier effect."

Helen admits that not all her experiences with the big companies were good. But she says what she simply did was "pick what was good, and add my own learnings."

The lack of a mentor system during her stint at SGV made her conscious of the need to be aware of the talents of the people you hire and to maximize their capabilities.

She adopted Citibank's systems and standards in her firm.

One thing she did not adopt was the hierarchical corporate system in both firms. To Helen, the most effective structure is a flat one, which she uses in The Little Gym.

"In the generation of ideas, we are a flat organization." she says.

In the end, she is glad she does not belong to a hierarchical structure.

"I know I can be political and scheming too because in a political environment, you have to watch your words. But I made it a personality thing. I don't want to be like that," she says.

One who mastered fiction in film used truth as the best weapon

By Dante M. Velasco
Contributor

EXECUTIVE READ

"When Character Was King"
By Peggy Noonan
Penguin Books, 2001

UNDERSTANDABLY, most people of this country struggle over one question: Who should be the next President of this not-so-strong Republic? The choices, until recently, were among the incumbent President who is rating low, a former Senator and Education Secretary who is concededly intelligent and seasoned on the political stage, and a Senator whose reputation, however, is stuck with his tour duty as a controversial chief of the national police.

All three have great issues attached to their aspirations: experience for the incumbent, education for the former Secretary, and peace and order for the top policeman. Is that all?

One doesn't think so. An aspirant to the vice presidency, Senator Loren Legarda, after noting that aspirants can casually and conveniently address issues that endear themselves to the electorate, reduced the choice to one fundamental: the candidate's character. The ultimate test is the character of the individual—his or her integrity, courage and demonstrated capability to do what is right, not what is expedient or popular.

What about competence, educational attainment, and preparedness for the job? These points have assumed larger significance with the entry of one of the most popular action stars joining the political fray—and some people were advancing arguments that were used to elect a former President who ended up in jail; the same argument that tries to connect affinity with the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger and, in the early eighties, the assumption to the US Presidency of Ronald Reagan.

Our view of Ronald Reagan was too simplistic compared to the many-sided personality of this Great Communicator. The book, "When Character Was King," a story of Reagan by one of his finest speech writers, reveals a lot about this highly successful and much-loved President the Americans ever had.

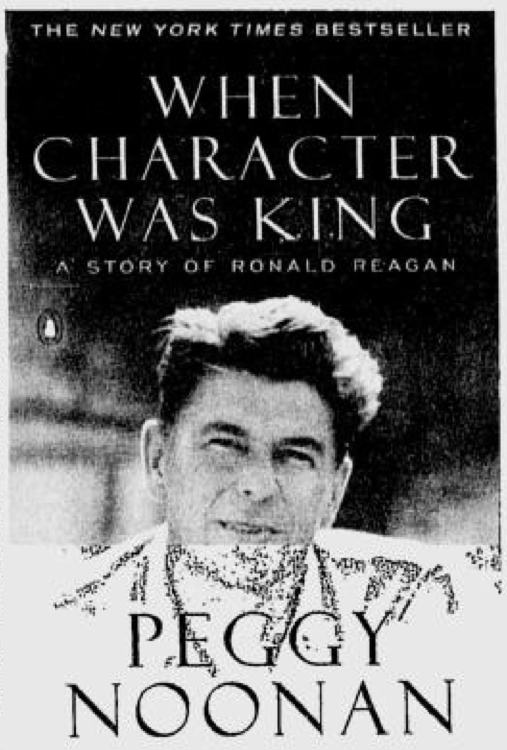
He controlled inflation, perked up the American economy, raised individual incomes, reduced taxes, and made the US the preeminent player in the geo-political war where the antagonist, Soviet Russia, turned out to be a non-power at all.

What began the making of Reagan the communicative leader? Noonan is insightful: "As president of the Screen Actors Guild, Reagan learned how to negotiate, play tough and get tough, how to feint, stall and vamp for time, how to wait them out, how to smoke out the real reason for an impasse. He learned that it was not personal, it's business. It's politics."

Reagan was generally a nice guy. One time, he lost his temper because his reserved room was given to someone else. He berated the man, was rude and impatient—and he left. Asked if the counter person saw Reagan again: "Oh sure, the next morning when he came to apologize."

Soon enough, Reagan has perfected his way with words, and dished out his version of reality masterfully. On switching parties—from Democrat to Republican, Reagan said: "We didn't change ... they changed."

From actor, Reagan increasingly was involved in talking about governance, about issues that citizens wanted to hear—from his denunciations of big government to criticisms of a heavy tax burden. As related by Noonan, the turning point of Reagan's life was when he spoke for half an hour on NBC. That was the moment. Noonan says: "He stepped into national politics, became a presence in the nation's political life. He stepped into history."



He was 54 when he ran for governor. The opponent, Pat Brown, dismissed Reagan as an actor, and implied "he was a phony, mouthing words as an actor does from a script he hasn't written." But Reagan was a good writer, had ear for music and employed cadence in his written and spoken words—in plays and his stories. As history would have it, Reagan won by a landslide over Brown.

After the governorship, the Presidency was not far behind. After the primaries, the Republican bet had to face the Democratic incumbent: Jimmy Carter. The high point of his campaign was at the "Reagan-Carter Debate" in 1980 when Reagan took command of television, and left these words ringing: "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?"

In a book that is full of insights about the man in private and the President in public, author Noonan observes: "Nothing internal, within him, changed. His character seemed to be an unbroken line that didn't waver or soar too high or low. He was not given to conceit, didn't play with people when he had the chance, didn't show up places late because he's the most important and interesting man invited, so the fun will have to start when he gets there."

Reagan's dealing with issues at home and abroad has been characterized by candor and devotion to truth, according to the author. Noonan says: "He loved the truth ... He thought the truth is the only foundation on which can be built something strong and good and lasting—because only truth endures. Lies die. He wanted to crowd out the false with the true."

When politicians in the past sidestepped the issue of attacking the Soviet Union, Reagan called it the "The Evil Empire." In one speech, he told Soviet Union Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev, "Tear down this wall!" referring to the Berlin Wall.

The author adds an insight: "He didn't know how very soon the wall would fall, and literally a six-ton piece of it would be shipped to America to be installed at the Reagan Library."

To many of us engrossed in comparisons and in our search for parallels, Reagan's portrait can be used and misused by candidates. Surely, many of these aspirants pale in comparison with this President who happens to have been a university graduate, has ample gray matter between his ears, has the skills of a master negotiator, the courage to do what is right—and one who has found the truth as the best weapon to craft great policies, take resolute action, and gain victory. *(dantemv@i-next.net)*

Turning nature's rejects into export items

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

TAYABAS, Quezon—George and Susan Lonosa, both in their early 40s, have endured the challenge of making a living for their seven children by discovering Mother Earth's bounties as raw materials in the business of producing different stuffed miniature animals, mostly for export.

"All raw materials are just there, lying around or growing from patches of soil, all waiting to be discovered. It would only need a spark of creativity and wild imagination on how they could be used. Coupled with patience and perseverance, these materials offer unlimited potentials as money-maker in any entrepreneurial venture," George waxes philosophical in an interview with the INQUIRER.

With the advent of the Yuletide season, their small abode that also doubles as makeshift factory in Barangay Wakas has been busily producing familiar Christmas decors for the past three months.

Dayami

Popular among their holiday product lines include a seven-foot figure of St. Joseph with his cane, standing beside Virgin Mary with Infant Jesus in the comfort of her bosom, serenely watched by familiar donkeys, sheep and other manger animals in typical nativity settings—all made of coconut fiber or palay-straw locally called *dayami*.

A Santa Claus figure, also made of *dayami*, riding in his reindeer sleigh or a trumpeting angel made from strips of native rattan, are also among the favorite buy.

Susan recalls how George left them in Bicol in 1994 to work for her brother Freddie, who pioneered the trade in Barangay Mateuna here.

But after two years, the factory folded up due to unpaid accounts from unscrupulous Manila-based exporters.

"Several thousands of pesos were lost because of bouncing checks or the exporters simply declared bankruptcy. My brother had no other recourse but to give up his business or face more losses," Susan says.

Left with nothing but rich ideas of future wide array of designs from his short stint as quality control officer of the failed venture, George decided to uproot his family from his native Daraga, Albay to join him in opening a similar line of business that started to linger in his mind.

Start

It was September 1996 when the Lonosas started producing exportable items using the same native materials that they used in the old company.

They paid P1,000 a month for a 600-square-meter property.

"We started producing in small quantity the same exportable product items like stuffed pigs, swan, reindeer, rabbit and other animals—all made from *dayami*. A little coat of paint tied with colorful ribbons and it's ready for export if there are any interested buyers," George says.

It was February 1997. The day he started the venture remains vivid in George's memory.

He was working on a new design of a rabbit-holding-a-carrot figure using *dayami* as material under the cool shades of banana plants, when this man from Tel-Manila, a Europe-based export-import company, passed by and saw him engrossed in his work.

"He parked his car and walked straight to me. After some introduction and questions, he told me that he liked my style. He gave me his calling card and asked me to meet him in his Manila office for a possible business partnership," George recalls.

The next several days were spent in meticulous production of more samples.

Orders

"When I reached Tel-Manila's office, they took photos of my creations and sent them to their foreign principals through the computer and afterwards, he casually made his first order," says George.

"I was ecstatic. But the first thing I asked him was to give me a down payment to start production. He gave me the money and that's it," George recalls, adding that after he delivered the products ahead of schedule, he was given another order of a much bigger quantity.

The Lonosas had finished another batch of several thousands of miniature *dayami* piglets bound for Holland and Sweden, which they worked on from May to October.

"Europeans are fond of animal figurines, especially when composed from indigenous materials," George says.

The buyers sell the products abroad at double the purchase price from the Lonosas.

Susan's younger brother Dante says he could finish a seven-footer St. Joseph *dayami* figure in just two and a half hours. Including the trimming and final touches, it usually takes three hours.

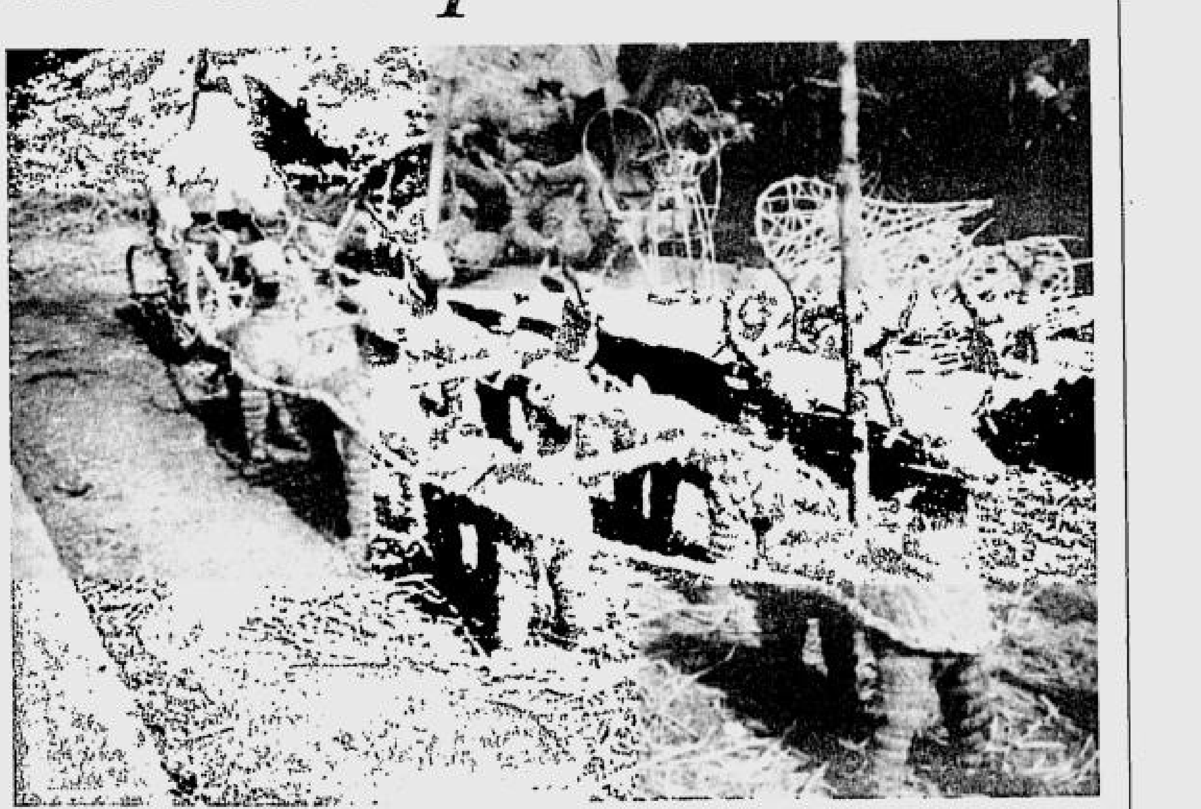
"I receive P150 for every giant figure," Dante says.

If they have orders for export, they hire the services of at least 18 contractual workers, but in regular workloads, the business maintains 6 employees.

Production

Production for the Christmas decors starts October.

Most of the time, the customers come with their own concepts, especially if the product design will be entered in a contest.


SANTA Claus and his reindeer sleigh all made from "dayami."

"We execute it using the desired raw materials," George says.

He amusingly recalls one incident: "There was a time that all the winners in the town's contest of Christmas decors were all made by us. But of course, it was the customer's own design, we just chipped in some ideas for improvement."

They source their supplies of palay-straw from a rice-producing village in nearby Lucena City, coconut fiber from Sariaya town, white *buli* from Agdangan and rattan from Mauban town.

"The prices of our Christmas decors depend on the size and the kind of material," George discloses.

The complete Nativity setting with a standing seven-footer *dayami* figure of St. Joseph costs around P7,000. But the same size of the manger setting costs double if made from coconut fiber.

Painted *dayami* Santa Claus with his reindeer sleigh costs less than P1,000.

Customers during the holidays include the Quezon provincial government, local governments, Quezon Memorial Hospital, Philhealth, Manila-based malls and supermarkets, local hotels and parishes.

Yearlong

As this interview was taking place, several groups of customers were seen placing their orders of different Christmas decors, the *dayami* Santa Claus as the favorite item.

"Sometimes, the customers ask me to make a special design to suit their needs. In a couple of days, we will deliver the order and even arrange them for free," Susan says.

The venture is yearlong. George says that after they finish working on the orders for Christmas, they start working on coconut shell candy containers for export to Europe.

Susan laments their helplessness in running after unscrupulous export brokers that deal with small businessmen like them.

The business nearly collapsed after an Indian export trader based in Dasmariñas, Cavite left behind more than P100,000 in bad accounts.

Problem

"A small business with no name like us is at the mercy of Manila-based exporters. They buy our products cheap, and sell them abroad at a much higher price," Susan says.

She continues to work hard at collecting the unpaid accounts from the Indian trader, "or else I will suffer the fate of my brother."

"He still owes me around P30,000," Susan says.

She appeals for government help in protecting their business against unscrupulous traders.

Corporate fashion for men these holidays

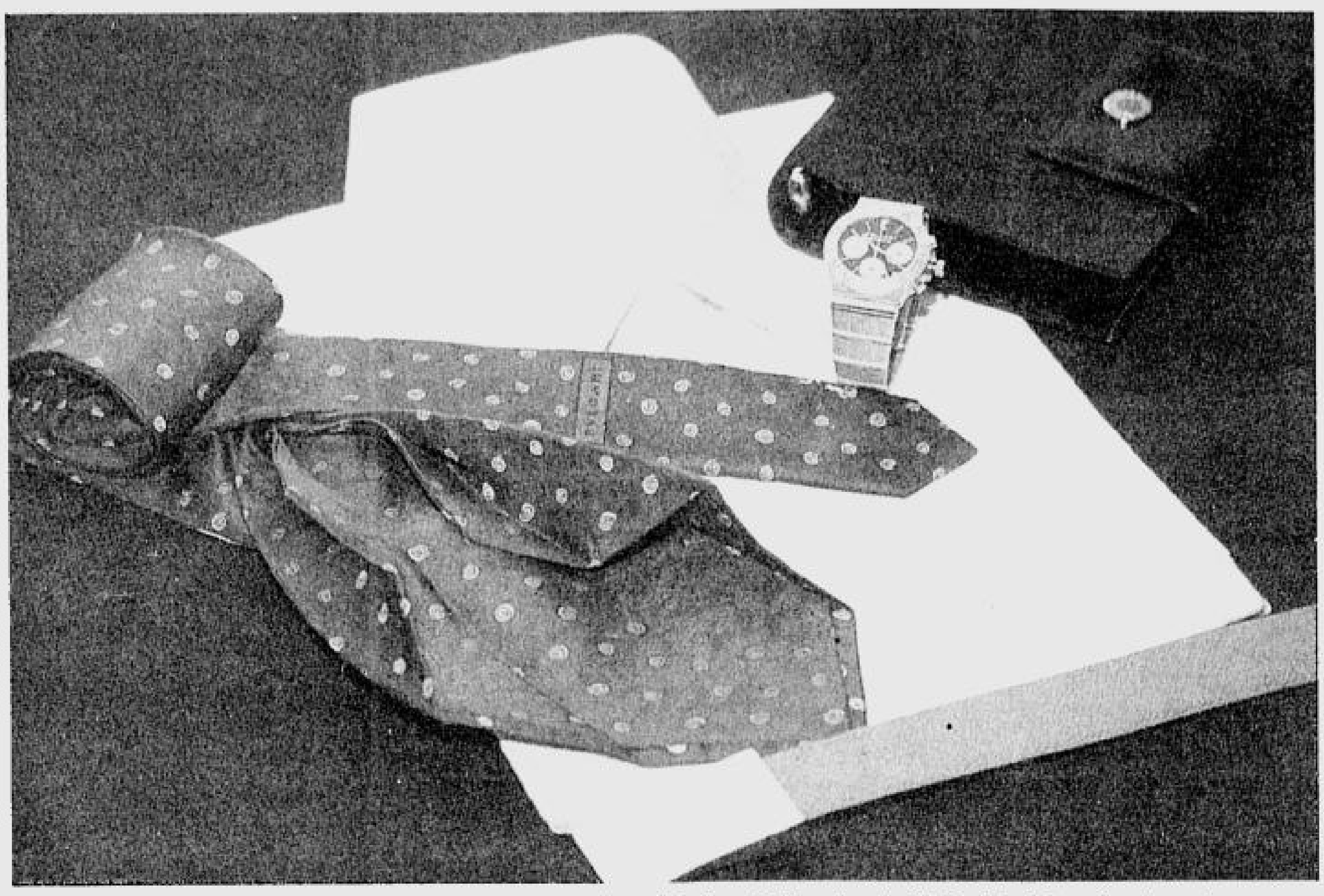
FOR men who like to look good—and that should be all of them—the holiday season is as good a time as any to get all spruced up. That's just about now, till after the nights settle back down to warmer temperatures.

Office attire in particular doesn't have to be lacking in holiday cheer. Here are a few rules of thumb for corporate men of varied professions.

Helping out is Bvlgari country manager Mario Katigbak, making use of the famous Italian line's fall/winter collection of men's shirts, ties and accessories.

Key considerations in dressing is the man's personality and career. And for the corporate guy, accessories would be the way to exhibit personality, namely through the tie, belt, watch, pochette or silk square, cufflinks and eyewear.

The photos show ways by which a man's basic shirt can be dressed up or down through the use of accessories.

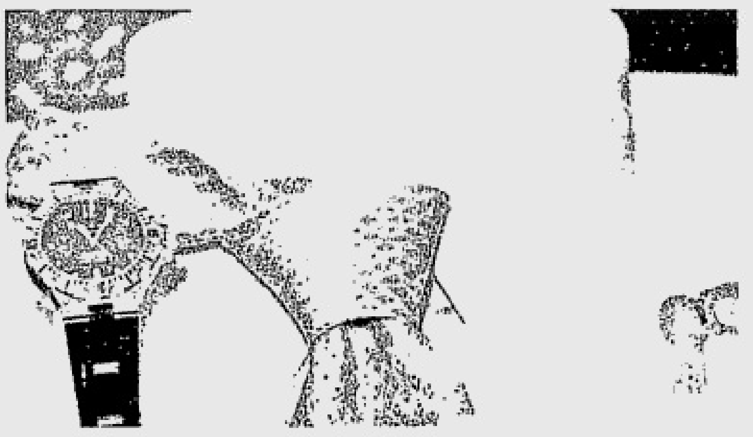


YOUNGER and trendier. Chrono watch in combination ; silk necktie in red Chioccioca (with dots); belt in amber/smooth reversible (with silver buckle); black nylon filofax white palladium.

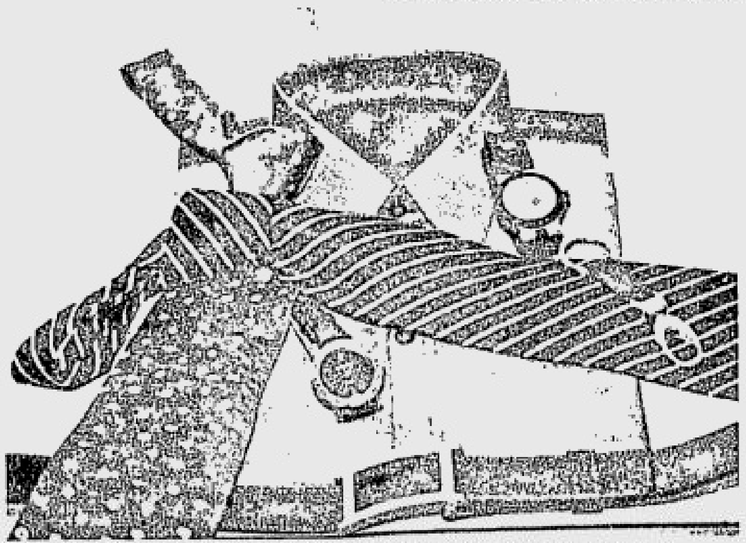
THE classic young: Bvlgari classic steel/gold men's watch; men's belt in smooth black leather white palladium; navy silk necktie pois a righe (with dots) and silk square navy china pocchete Mosaico. RANDY HORMILLOSA

Mario's styling goes from classic and conservative, to playful to trendy or sporty, making use of color, shape and material. According to him, "the color of accessories usually triggers the look you want to achieve."

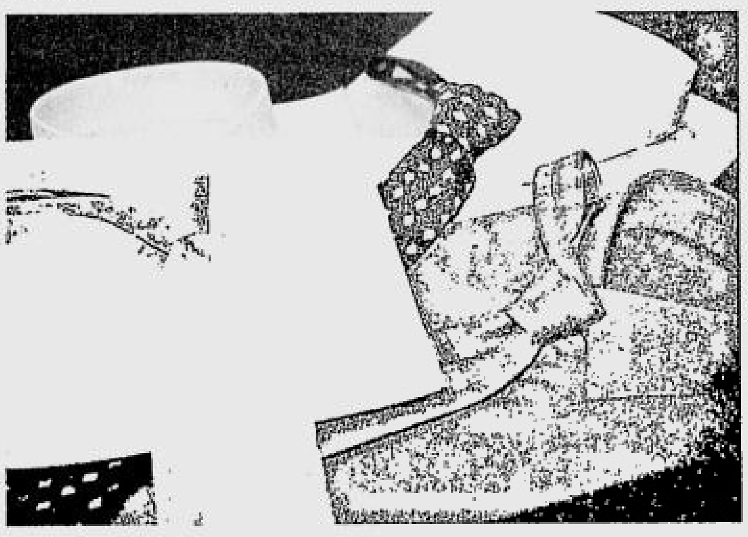
In general, the holiday or fall/winter look is characterized by richer and darker colors, as compared to the lighter, more casual look of summer.



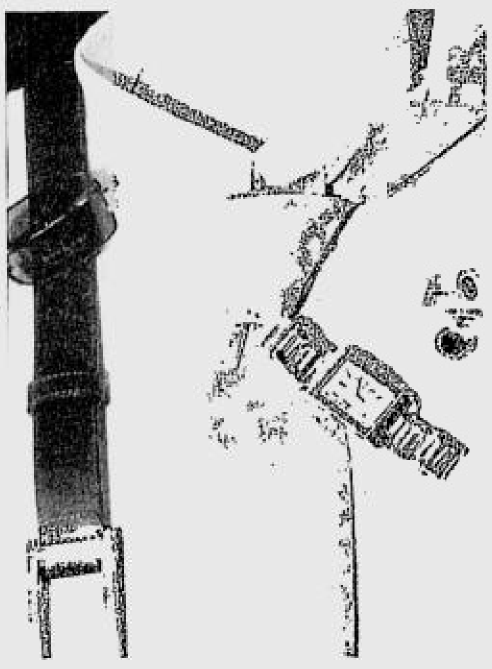
FOR fair skinned men. Men's scuba gold watch with rubber strap; silk necktie in Pavone light yellow; silk square pochette Topkapi tobacco (light brown).



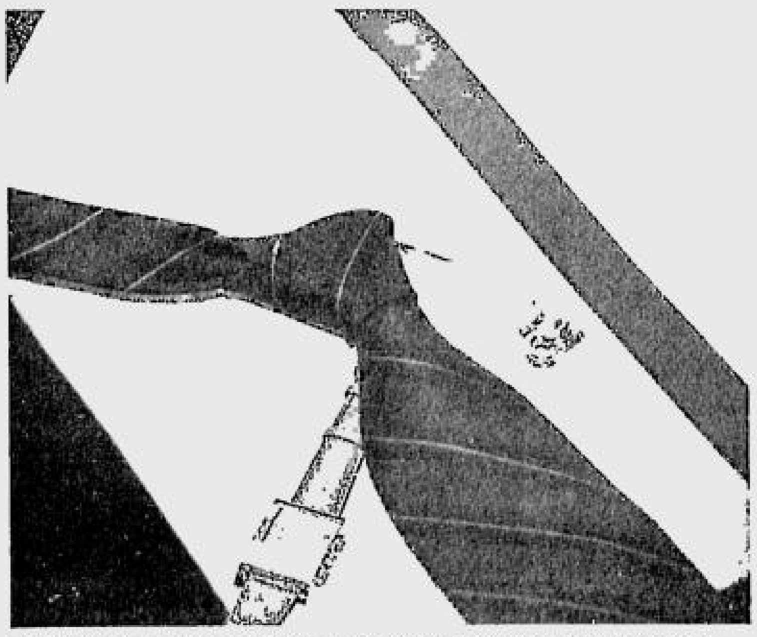
YOUNG fashionable daywear office look. Bvlgari-Bvlgarimen's watch; Diagono AL-38-GVD men's watch, men's limited rettangolo; silk necktie in charcoal grey; silk necktie in Karl navy ; keyholder "O" in black.



MIX and match. Light colored shirt with silver tie ; light blue shirt with navy silk necktie- Cuori Quadri; blue shirt with dark grey silk necktie, Principe Di Galles Tourquoise Greed



THE CLASSIC young look. Rettangolo 45 SSD steel watch; light blue Intreccio checkered silk necktie; silver BGB onyx cufflinks; men's belt in limited Rettangolo in matte titanium buckle; men's sunglasses in black titanium.



CLASSIC look or toned down look, mature and "have arrived" look. . Rettangolo men's watch with tan leather strap, silk necktie in grey/blue Doppia Riga (large stripes)

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Congratulations!

Kabalikat sa Pabahay 2003 Awardees

abahay 2003 Awards
Outstanding Developer

Messages

MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

Housing has been a centerpiece of our Administration's development agenda. By focusing on housing, we are able to respond to the need for shelter of millions of Filipinos as well as stimulate various housing related industries that contribute to economic growth.

The success of our housing program is evident in the lives of over 600,000 families who have been granted shelter security under my term. Through the *Kabalikat sa Pabahay 2003 Awards*, we are giving long-overdue recognition to private companies, non-government organizations, local government units and other stakeholders who have been our most reliable allies in the war against homelessness.

I, therefore, extend my warmest felicitations to the men and women of the **Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC)** for holding the *Kabalikat sa Pabahay 2003 Awards*. My congratulations, too, to the awardees and the other shelter agencies behind this undertaking. May you be inspired to continue your unwavering support to, and partnership with, the government as we carry out the task of providing decent and adequate shelter for our countrymen.

MABUHAY!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SENATE
MANILA

Congratulations to the **Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC)** on your first ever *Kabalikat sa Pabahay Awards*.

The *Kabalikat sa Pabahay Awards* is an idea whose time has come. The outstanding private companies, organizations and local government units involved in housing deserve to be recognized for their valuable contributions to an important aspect of national development. And, as there is still much room for improvement in the housing sector, these awards will also serve to encourage others to strive for excellence.

My utmost compliments go to the winners—*mga totoong kabalikat sa pabahay*. May this well-deserved tribute to your work and your achievements serve as an impetus for you to continue the task of building decent shelter for our countrymen and ultimately building a strong nation.

Congratulations and Mabuhay!

SEN. FRANCIS N. PANGILINAN
Chairman, Committee on Housing

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

My heartfelt congratulations to the **Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC)** and the other key shelter agencies for leading the industry in what can only be described as a new upsurge in the housing industry.

Without doubt, this unprecedented activity in the housing sector can only be attributed to a government that is serious in combating landlessness and homelessness in our country, and to a dynamic private sector receptive to policy and systemic developments.

The holding of the *Kabalikat sa Pabahay Awards 2003* is thus very timely. It not only recognizes the contributions of the different stakeholders toward making the housing industry what it is today, it also symbolizes a new era of active partnership between government, private sector and civil society.

Mabuhay!

REP. PROSPERO NOGRALES
Chairman, Committee on Housing
House of Representatives

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL

We in the government housing sector have always maintained that building homes for the Filipino and securing land tenure for the masses is not an easy task. It requires the combined energies and resources of government, private sector and civil society for access to appropriate technology, capital, project development, community organization, and end-user and developmental financing and guaranties.

The process may have been difficult and challenging, yet today, the housing sector counts among its accomplishments the creation of jobs and provision of access to services otherwise lacking in the absence of planned community development and planning. With housing, we have made a positive impact on the economy and on our people

These awards – the *Kabalikat sa Pabahay Awards 2003* – is our way of recognizing the efforts and initiatives of all our partners in housing. It is our way of thanking and assuring them that we will continue to fulfill the Filipino dream of owning a home.

As we have all witnessed, there is no discounting the value of working together towards a common objective

A toast to all. Mabuhay tayong lahat!

SEC. MICHAEL T. DEFENSOR
Chairman

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL

The *Kabalikat sa Pabahay Awards* is, first and foremost, a celebration of the spirit of collaboration that has moved the housing program to unprecedented heights under the present administration. It is not a competition between and among the various developers, banks, technology providers, local governments and non-government organizations to declare one as better than the others

We are recognizing the efforts of all the stakeholders who have helped us, as exemplified by those whose outstanding achievements we are distinguishing through these awards.

The winners of these awards have been carefully selected based on the criteria set by the different shelter agencies, in coordination with the **Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC)**. We hope that this distinction will serve as inspiration for them and for their peers as we look forward to establishing the *Kabalikat sa Pabahay Awards* as a strong tradition and institution in the housing sector.

Congratulations to the winners, at Mabuhay tayong lahat!

USEC. ARMANDO A. DE CASTRO
Chairman
Kabalikat sa Pabahay Awards
Technical Working Committee

Winners of the Kabalikat Sa Pabahay Awards 2003

NATIONAL HOME MORTGAGE FINANCE CORPORATION

Outstanding Community Association – CMP Project

National Winner
Garcia Heights Credit Coop.,
Bgy. 19-B, Bajada, Davao City

Luzon
Villa Alfonso HOA Inc.,
Bambang, Pasig City

Visayas
Lahing-Lahing N-hood Assn., Inc.
Mabolo, Cebu City

Mindanao
Suraya HOA, Inc., Ph-1
Bgy. Cabantian, Buhangin District,
Davao City

Outstanding CMP Originator (Non-Government Organization)

Luzon
Foundation for Development Alternatives

Visayas
Pagtambayayong-a Foundation for Mutual Aid, Inc.

Mindanao
Assumption Parish of Davao Socio-Economic Development Foundation (APSED)

Outstanding CMP Originator – Local Government Units

LGU – Antipolo City
LGU - Bacolod City
(Bacolod Housing Authority)
LGU - Cebu City (CCUP)
LGU – Marikina City
LGU – Pasig City

Special CMP Citations

LGU - Quezon City
LGU – Las Piñas

Provincial Government of Rizal

NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

Outstanding Community Association in High Collection, Land Tenure Assistance Program

Damayan Angela ng Antipolo Homeowners Association,
Antipolo City

Outstanding Housing Cooperatives

Bayanihan Credit Union, Inc.
Bulacan

San Francisco Government Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperative
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Outstanding Housing Technology Providers

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Mindanao
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San Isidro, General Santos

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Novaliches, Quezon City

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DIR. BUYERS 0917-7310820

KALOOCAN

CAMARIN CAL CITY LA240m²
FA104/m 2Bdrms 1T&B
P1.2M Vic/Gie 8903461loc27

LAS PINAS

LAS PINAS/BACOOR
2-4 BRS, 1-3 T&B, 2Storey
P5,000 to Reserve/No loan req'd
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AYALABANG/SOUTHVALE/
STONECREST B-NEW, SWAP,
TERMS 726-0434, 726-4371,
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DE CASTRO SUBD 2Stry P1 8M
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2T&B Vic 8903461 loc 27

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HOUSE & LOT

QUEZON CITY

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9312022 / 09178161862

New St. Ignatius Vill. P11M
4rm 4tb 2car T647-3070

PROJ.6 BNEW 9263307

Proj.8 2Story S.Pool
1028sqm Victoria • 778-1541

TIERRA BELLA 8M 931-5553

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BIRMINGHAM
Place2/Homes/Sunrise
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Antipolo 2br2tb grge P1.150T
Belen Reyes 655-0134
L.B.Lee Realty 931-8425

BATANGAS

AYALA PROPERTY
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364 SQM HOUSE N LOT
2.5M NEG 500T DP
BAL 2 YRS TO PAY
W/O INT 0918-9424538

CAVITE

IMUS, CAVITE P200T Neg
Leo 655-0585 633-6327

TRECE, NO DOWN 4544081

HOUSE & LOT
FOR AS LOW AS
P6,912.07
MONTHLY
IMUS, CAVITE
535-7142
535-7172

LAGUNA

Binan P1.8M 4BR3TB 8278618

LAGUNA BEL-AIR LA132/m²
3bdrms 2T&B FA84/m²
P1.85M Vic 8903461 loc27/25

MILAN CAMELLA HOMES
3Stry FA 210/m LA 78/m²
P1.9M Vic 8903461 loc 27/25

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BnewTwnhse/3stry/3br/2tb/grge
P3.435M 8903461 loc 34

MANILA

ESPANA TOWER
nr UST 0917-8102903

NR LA SALLE
BnewTwnhse/3stry/3br/3tb/grge
P3.295M 8903461 loc 34

CONDO/TWNHSE

MANILA

Nr UST 3.6M 4br 3tb 1cg Nr
bank, Loan Ok Call 645-3731

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RP DUTERTE
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VVerde 2 60m² P2M 951-0647

QUEZON CITY

Eastwood P4.5M 77sqm 8274972

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P3.7M 2car grge 4BR
5T&B Maids Rm w/roof deck
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QC Thse 3BR 115m² 9510647

Rush! Fernandina 88 100sqm
4.5M Neg 3br 2tb 0916-7069277

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LOT

KALOOCAN

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P3,473/m² Vic 8903461 loc25

LAS PINAS

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Espana 4158141 / 7237351

Nr Malacanang 570sqm 16T
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REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LOT

PARANAQUE

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Vacant lot located at Thomas Street, Multinational Village, Parañaque City
LOT AREA : 800 sq.m. Php 4,320,000.00 (negotiable)
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PASIG

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P4,054/m Vic 8903461 loc 27

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RIZAL

Rush Village East 3 Ph2
Blk58 txt09173777264

OTHER AREAS

TOWN & CNTRY HILLS LA240m²
P3,125/m² Vic 8903461loc 27

BATANGAS

RANCHO VISTA SUBD LA613m²
P2,284/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

TAAL BTGS nr Diversion Rd
6794m² P185.50/m² Vic8903461

BULACAN

SAN MIGUEL LA 4000m²
P180/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

TOWN & COUNTRY LA 180m²
P2,900/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

CAVITE

DON BOSCO EXEC HTS LA128m²
P2,900/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

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P2,650/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

LAGUNA

SOUTH PEAK P5,000/m²
LA240m² Vic8903461loc25/27

SOUTH POINT 4T/m² 9510647

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LOT

PARANAQUE

MEMORIAL LOT

Lot P45T/serv P70T T8274972

MALAYAN GUD LOC 2884154

BULACAN

SAN MIGUEL LA 4000m²
P180/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

BATANGAS

TAAL BTGS nr Diversion Rd
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For Sale PIG FARM
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P1M BENG 9314466 /9124573

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MAKATI

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REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

HOUSE

LAS PINAS

2BR 2TB w/Grge Tel 8264843
Martinville Subdivision

MARIKINA

Res Hse 3BR Olive SSS Vil
Concepcion Mkrna nr Lilac
9422925 / 0917-4445233

PARANAQUE

BF P23T/mo 4BR3TB 8278759

PASIG

Metropolis Vil Sta Lucia
5BR 3TB Wall Paper 656-4928

QUEZON CITY

Blue Ridge 18T T647-3070
3Rms 3tb 1Car Kit Liv.

Commonwealth Capitol Estates2 3BR 2TB 0920-9237438

CONDO/TWNHSE

KALOOCAN

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Awa Caloocan 323-0175

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REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LOT

PARANAQUE

CONDO/TWNHSE

PARANAQUE

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QUEZON CITY

3BR Valencia corner Castilla St
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LOT

PARANAQUE

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2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

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CAR LOAN

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

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4 Sale: Prudential Fxd-Value
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Frances •8987534•7760652•

EDUCATION PLAN 8061574

EDUCATION PLANS 7137284

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PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

PCCI OFFICE
Will be closed from
December 24, 2003
- January 4, 2004.
And will resume
its operations
on Monday,
January 5, 2004.

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Ana Sarmiento and Faustino Pedro, Parcel of lands located in Pasong Tamo, Quezon City, particularly described in TCT No. 5360 of Lot 777-B of the Piedad estate and TCT No. 19491 of Lot 713-C also of the Piedad estate has been extrajudicially settled among their heirs as per Doc 427 Page 66 Book 17 Series 2002 before Notary Public Atty Hector B. Centeno, QC
(PDI–Dec. 21, 28, 2003 & Jan. 4, 2004)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Rufino I. Arcadio was extrajudicially settled by the heirs as per Doc 134 Page 28 Book WII Series 2003 by Notary Public Atty Librado S. Angeles
(PDI - Dec. 7, 14, 21, 2003)

PERSONAL

Thank You Holy Spirit
From: Gemma Santos & Family

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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6. PAKISTAN—LAHORE UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES (URL:www.lums.edu.pk/, E-mail: admissions@lums.edu.pk)
7. PHILIPPINES—ASIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT (URL: http://www.aim.edu.ph, E-mail: Admissions@aim.edu.ph), INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE / UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES IN LOS BAÑOS (URL: www.training.irri.org/, E-mail: adb-inquiry@irri.exch.cgiar.org),
8. SINGAPORE—NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE (URL:http://www.fba.nus.edu.sg/, http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/ppp/mpp/core.html, E-mail: ecsbox10@nus.edu.sg, Bizbox18@nus.edu.sg, mppbox1@nus.edu.sg, ecssec@nus.edu.sg, sdelvic@nus.edu.sg)
9. THAILAND—ASIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (URL: http://www.ait.ac.th, E-mail: admissions@ait.ac.th), THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY—(URL:http://grad.tu.ac.th/, E-mail: Tureview@alpha.tu.ac.th)
10. USA—EAST-WEST CENTER (URL:http://www.eastwestcenter.org, E-mail: adbjsp@eastwestcenter.org)

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS: Prospective applicants must: be a citizen of an ADB developing member country, have at least two years work experience, have gained admission to an approved course in a designated institution, be in good health, not more than 35 years old at the time of application. (Staff of ADB and the designated institutions and their close relatives are not eligible to apply).

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS: Applicants should: obtain application forms from the designated institutions of their choice; submit the completed application form and required documentation to the Institution, indicate on the application form that the applicant wishes to be considered for an Asian Development Bank-Japan Scholarship. (From among those admitted by the institutions, ADB will select candidates for award of scholarships. A separate application to ADB is not necessary).

FUR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT THE ADB-JSP website: http://www.adb.org/jsp

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ANNOUNCEMENT

SANDUGO CLASS
RAFFLE DRAW
EXTENDED UNTIL
20 MARCH 2004

TAHARUDIN P. AMPATUAN
(Chairman, BOT)

EDWIN C. SADANG
President

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT
Bids & Awards Committee

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

KALAHI-CIDSS PROJECT
CONSULTING SERVICES FOR INDEPENDENT NGO MONITORING

The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development toward the cost of the **Kapit-Bisig Laban Sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery Of Social Services Project (KALAHI-CIDSS)**, and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payment of professional services of an Independent NGO Monitoring of the KALAHI-CIDSS Project.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development which is the lead implementing agency for this flagship project of the government in fighting poverty now invites Proponents for the hiring of Independent NGO Monitors for KALAHI-CIDSS in four pilot regions covering eleven municipalities of those who have participated in PHASE I of the project.

The Contracting Agent will be responsible to the KALAHI-CIDSS National Project Director for the monitoring and implementation of projects in the municipalities covered by the study. Proponents should be a respectable firm with a proven capability to perform monitoring and evaluation work particularly in the area of social programs involving community participation.

Interested Proponents may submit their Application Letters, Company Profile and sample works to the Bids & Awards Committee Secretariat at 2nd floor, DSWD, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City with telephone numbers: 951-71-16 until January 7, 2004 at 5:00 PM.

(Sgd.) **RHODA F. YAP**
Assistant Secretary and Chairperson,
Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI--Dec. 21, 2003)

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Invitation to Suppliers

A Mindanao-based Japanese company is in need of raw materials for the BRICK MANUFACTURING such as:

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For more information please contact: Engr. Jun Pollente (Cell No. 0917-502-6054)

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INVITATION TO BID

The Bank will schedule for auction eleven (11) properties, with one lot having a residential improvement, more particularly described as follows:

Located at Barangay Banilad, Mandaue City

1)	5,000	square meters
2)	2,025	square meters
3)	2,048	square meters
4)	5,239	square meters
5)	772	square meters
6)	772	square meters
7)	773	square meters
8)	2,317	square meters

Located at V. Rama Avenue, Barangay Guadalupe, Cebu City

9)	245	square meters
10)	492	square meters

Located at Salinas Drive, Amon Court, Lahug, Cebu City

11)	406	square meters with improvements with floor area of 223 square meters

For interested parties, please call (032) 811-5807 to 14. Look for Gee or Cirila

(PDI–Dec. 21 & 28, 2003)

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Jocelyn Marie Guillen Crisologo

Joined our Creator on December 19, 2003.

Her loving children **Mikael, Pia, Yaffa, Lara, Ofir, Alex** and **Jake**; her mother **Dolgely**; her brother **Gerry**; and her relatives request the readers to pray for the eternal repose and happiness of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on December 23, 2003 at 12:00 noon at the Malabon Public Cemetery.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT

MESSAGE OF THANKS

DEATH ANNIVERSARY

REQUIEMS

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments

ANTONIO "TONY" MARQUITA UMALI

(Beloved Spouse of LOURDES BONDOC UMALI)

*Peacefully joined our Lord
on December 12, 2003 at the age of 73.*

Prayers for the eternal repose of his soul are requested by his loving wife, children & grandchildren: **Drs. RAINIER & MARIS UMALI – Antonio Rainier, Derald, Bianca & Jerica; MARISSA & BILL LARKIN – Nico; ABIGAIL & ANDY CLAVERIA – Mykka, Tristan, Drew & Joshua; ERIC & FE UMALI – Khin-Khin**; brothers, sisters, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, relatives and friends.

His remains will be arriving from the U.S. on December 23, 2003 at 10:30 in the morning and will lie in state at SANCTUARIO de SAN JOSE, EAST GREENHILLS.

Mass will be said on December 23, 7 p.m. at the memorial chapel of Sanctuario de San Jose.

Interment will be at Loyola Memorial Park Marikina on December 24, 2003 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Sanctuario de San Jose.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Engr. Eduardo L. Lagunilla

**of Bangar, La Union and Tipas, Taguig, M.M.
who joined our Lord on November 21, 2003**

wish to convey our heartfelt gratitude to all those who offered Masses, prayers and flowers, visited and kept vigil, joined us in burial rites, and in one way or the other condoled with us and showed love and concern in our time of bereavement.

Thank you so much. God Bless.

The Chairman, members of the Board of Directors, management and staff of Ace/Saatchi & Saatchi (formerly Ace-Compton) Advertising wish to convey their deepest condolence to the family of

GREGORIO L. ARANETA II

(former Chairman and President)

and in communion request everyone to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains were interred last Friday, December 19 at the Martinez Mausoleum, Balayan Cemetery, Batangas.

A memorial service will be held on Monday, December 22, 9:00 am at the mortuary chapel of Sanctuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati.

Emerenciana "Emmie" Gonzales Chanco

Born: December 27, 1922
Peacefully joined her Creator on December 20, 2003

Her bereaved husband Fernando F. Chanco (†); children and in-laws Mandy & Jun, Sandy & Nandy, Andy & Marlyne; grandchildren Mica, Andre, Miguel, Jason, Marese & Elise and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Mt. Carmel Chapel, Broadway, Quezon City

Interment will be on December 23, 2003 (Tuesday) at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 14:6

ARLINGTON PHILIP B. BETTS

*Died on December 19, 2003
at the age of 69.*

His loving wife **Araceli Nepomuceno**; children **Liza, Steve, Bob** and **Jane Jarabejo**; grandchildren **Huey Bautista, Ben** and **Bruce**; sister **Shirley Betts Renton** and brother-in-law **Bob Renton**; other relatives mourn his passing and wish his eternal rest.

His body lies in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels-Sucat, Parañaque.

Cremation will be held at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City on Tuesday, December 23, 2003 after the 9:30 a.m. Mass.

"And... I will dwell in the house of the Lord... Forever." Psalm 23

Message of Thanks

"Eternal Life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again." 2 Cor. 5:4-5

Gone but not forgotten, deep in our hearts, We love you and Miss you so much "Mommy"

The Family of the Late

Ester Guison Cruz

Peacefully died in the Grace of our Lord on November 11, 2003 at the age of 74.

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement. Please continue to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

There will be Mass offered for her on Sunday, 21 of December 2003, 12 noon at Mt. Carmel Church, Quezon City.

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES DILIMAN
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND BID

Interested parties are invited to prequalify and bid for the selection of proponents in the planning, development and management of the:

UP DILIMAN UNIVERSITY AVENUE INTERMODAL TRANSPORT STATION AND COMMERCIAL COMPLEX

University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman invites proponents to bid for the planning, development and management of an approximately 3.5-hectare property at the University entrance zone, south Philcoa area, extending eastward along University Avenue, as an Intermodal Transport Station and Commercial Complex, under a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Arrangement.

Prequalification forms and Terms of Reference (TOR) may be obtained from the UP Diliman Development and Planning Committee (DPC) Secretariat, Director's Office, Institute for Small-Scale Industries (4/F Virata Hall/ISSI Bldg.) University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City, upon payment of non-refundable fee of P2,000.00 from **January 12 to 16, 2004**. Deadline of submission of duly accomplished prequalification documents will be on **January 23, 2004**. After the evaluation of the documents submitted, the prequalified proponents shall be duly notified of the schedule of subsequent activities. For inquiries, please contact Tel. No. **920-5301** to **99** loc. **4717**; Tel./Fax No. **920-6923**, or Tel. No. **927-9238**; (c/o Ms. Ludy Cubillas); e-mail: *lourdes.cubillas@up.edu.ph*.

(Sgd.) **EMERLINDA R. ROMAN**
Chancellor

(PDI - Dec 14 & 21, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
THIRD ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROJECT

21 December 2003

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Loan No. PH-P184
IFB No. DPISU-CW-103

1. The Government of the Philippines, through the Department of Education (DepEd) has received an **ODA Loan** from **JAPAN BANK FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION** (hereinafter referred to as JBIC) toward the cost of Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP) and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments for civil works component of the project. Disbursement of an ODA Loan by JBIC will be subject in all respects to the terms and conditions of the Loan Agreement, including the disbursement procedures and the "Guidelines for Procurement under JBIC ODA Loans" No party other than the Government of the Philippines shall derive any rights from the Loan Agreement or have any claim to loan proceeds. The above Loan Agreement will cover only a part of the project cost. As for the remaining portion, the Government of the Philippines will take appropriate measures for finance.
2. JBIC requires the bidders and contractors, as well as the Government of the Philippines under contracts funded with JBIC ODA Loans and other Japanese ODA observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of such contracts. In pursuance of this policy JBIC.
   a) will reject a proposal for award if it determines that the bidder recommended for award has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for the contract in question;
   b) will recognize a contractor as ineligible for a period determined by JBIC, to be awarded a contract funded with JBIC ODA Loans if it at any times determines that the contractor has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for or in executing, another contract funded with JBIC ODA Loans or other Japanese ODA.
3. The DepEd Project Implementing Support Unit (DepEd-PISU) for TEEP through the DepEd-BAC ("the Employer") now invites sealed bids from qualified eligible bidders for the **Construction of a One (1) Unit - Two (2) Storey DepEd Division Office Building** ("the Works") in the province of Abra. Local contractors should be accredited with the Philippines Contractor's Accreditation Board (PCAB) and is classified at least **"Medium Sub-Category A"**.
4. Pre-bid Conference shall be held at DepEd-Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) Regional Office on **January 13, 2004** at **10:00 AM**. Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect and acquire the bidding documents, at the office of the Regional Bids and Awards Committee, DepEd CAR Office, Bgy. Wangal La Trinidad, Benguet.
5. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders starting **December 21, 2003** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 2,500.00) per set. The form of payment will be in cash or by cashier's check.
6. All bids must be accompanied by a security of two and a half (2.5%) percent of total bid price or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency in the form of bank guarantee or irrevocable letter of credit issued by a reputable bank and must be delivered to DepEd Region Office, Bgy. Wangal, La Trinidad, Benguet on or before **10:00 AM on January 19, 2004**. Bids will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
7. The estimated date of award is forty-five (45) calendar days upon the date of opening of bids.
8. The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids.

(Sgd.) **DELFIN E. SALLIDAO**
Pre/Post-Qualification,
Bids and Awards Committee (DepEd-CAR)
Chairman

(PDI - Dec 21, 2003)

Philippine Amusement & Gaming Corporation
A global corporation with a global mindset
and a Filipino Heart

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
ITB NO. 11-37-2003

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) is inviting all interested bidders in its forthcoming public bidding for the project stated hereunder:

Project : Supply & Delivery
1.5 million decks of Playing Cards
Approved Budget : One Million Eight Hundred Thousand U.S. Dollars
(US$ 1,800,000.00) (NOTE: CIF – Port of Manila)
Source of Funds : Internally Funded

One suppliers (foreign or local) duly registered with PAGCOR shall be allowed to participate in the bidding. Unregistered suppliers must register at the Suppliers Registration & Evaluation Section (SRES), Procurement & Property Department (PPD), 2nd Floor PAGCOR House, 1330 Roxas Blvd., Ermita Manila., Tel. No. 526-0573.

The detailed project particulars and instructions to bidders are discussed in the **Bid Documents** available for issuance **from December 12, 2003 to January 7, 2004** at the BAC Secretariat Unit, PPD-Corporate upon payment of a non-refundable fee of *One Thousand Pesos (Php 1,000.00)*. In order to secure the documents, bidders should present the Official Receipt issued by our Cashier to the BAC Secretary handling the project.

Pre-Bid Conference : January 7, 2004 (10:00 a.m.)
Submission & Opening of Bids : January 28, 2004 (10:00 a.m.)
(Envelopes 1 & 2)
Submission & Opening of Bids : March 29, 2004 (10:00 a.m. onwards)
(Envelope 3)

PAGCOR has the right to disqualify any prospective bidder found to have submitted falsified documents and/or information, to accept or reject any or all bids, to annul the bidding process, to waive any defects or formalities found therein and to accept such bid or a part thereof as may be deemed most advantageous to PAGCOR, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder/s.

PAGCOR reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract if there is *prima facie* evidence of collusion between appropriate public officers or employees of the agency, or between the BAC and any of the bidders, or if the collusion is between or among the bidders themselves, or between a bidder and a third party, including any act which restricts, suppresses or nullifies or tends to restrict, suppress or nullify competition, or if the BAC is found to have failed to follow the prescribed bidding procedures, or for any justifiable and reasonable ground where the award of the contract will not redound to the benefit of the government (R.A. 9184, Sec. 41).

Please address all communications to the BAC Secretariat Unit, Procurement & Property Department.

(Sgd.) RENE C. FIGUEROA
Chairperson, BAC-2

(PDI – Dec. 14 & 21, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES DILIMAN
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND BID

Interested parties are invited to prequalify and bid for the selection of proponents in the planning, development and management under a lease agreement of the:

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Prequalification forms and Terms of Reference (TOR) may be obtained from the UP Diliman Development and Planning Committee (DPC) Secretariat, Director's Office, Institute for Small-Scale Industries (4/F Virata Hall/ISSI Bldg.) University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City, upon payment of non-refundable fee of P2,000.00 from **January 12 to 16, 2004**. Deadline of submission of duly accomplished prequalification documents will be on **January 23, 2004**. After the evaluation of the documents submitted, the prequalified proponents shall be duly notified of the schedule of subsequent activities. For inquiries, please contact Tel. No. **920-5301** to **99** loc. **4717**; Tel./Fax No. **920-6923**, or Tel. No. **927-9238**; (c/o Ms. Ludy Cubillas); e-mail: *lourdes.cubillas@up.edu.ph*.

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(PDI - Dec 14 & 21, 2003)

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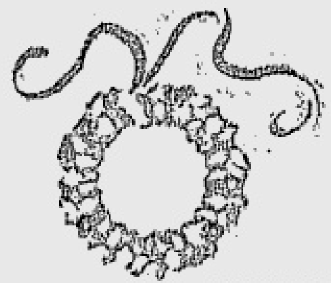

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Editor Aries Espinosa

RFM reloaded: We love kids

LISTED food giant RFM Corp celebrated its 45th anniversary recently as a fully-reloaded branded-food enterprise, with a renewed sense of purpose aptly captured in its new tagline RFM: We love kids.

Founded in 1958 as the Philippines' first flour milling company, RFM has evolved through the years from a commodity-based and agri-business producer to a huge industrial conglomerate involved in everything from food to property, electronics, banking and other business.

In the wake of the Asian crisis in 1997, RFM has had to dispose of some of its varied businesses to strengthen its financial position, including eventually the sale of its highly popular softdrinks subsidiary, Cosmos Bottling Corp.

In the process, RFM has focused its efforts to consolidate its standing as one of the country's respected experts in the manufacturing and marketing of fast-moving branded food and beverage products.

Today, at 45 years, RFM stands strongly with an array of powerful brands for the consumer market: White King hotcakes, rice-based mixes and sauces; Fiesta Pasta, Sunkist ready-to-drink and powdered juice drinks, Aqua Blue mineral water, Selecta Moo milk drinks, Selecta ice cream, Swift Mighty Meaty and Sweet N Juicy hotdogs, Swift Juicy corned beef and many more.

In all its enterprise-rebuilding efforts, RFM has rediscovered the basic theme that has run through many years of developing products for the Filipino consumer: its concern for the well being of children. RFM has not only been making food and beverage products that children enjoy, or sponsoring youth-oriented sports events and social development programs. RFM has been building upon a core Filipino value: it is in our nature to love our kids.

As conceptualized by RFM president and CEO Joey Concepcion, the RFM theme is now "RFM: We love kids".

He explained that "for a long time, our tagline was 'RFM: Raising the Quality of Food for the Filipino'. It's a good commitment, but I had always been looking for something with a more personal and meaningful connection. Thinking about what RFM has really been doing for people led me to see that its real focus has really been on kids - what they need, what they want, what they enjoy."

Being a family man himself with four children, Joey Concepcion centered on the basic idea that love is a commitment to always try to do one's best.

"At RFM, 'We love kids' is first of all, a commitment to quality in all the products we make available. It is also a commitment to innovate our products in ways that will make children healthier and happier. Even in our ads, we feature only those who can serve as good role models for kids," he said.

RFM's commitment outside the business has also tended towards the well-being and development of children. The company continues to be the major proponent in the annual search for the Ten Outstanding Students of the Philippines (TOSP) as well as the outreach programs of the Laura Vicuna Foundation for Street Children. In sports, RFM is well known for its support of basketball clinics and other training programs for children.

"As parents, as mothers and fathers, we could never give our kids something that may be bad for them. We will always try to give them the best that we can, whatever our station in life," Concepcion explained.

That is the aspiration that RFM has now captured in its theme as it marks its 45th year - RFM: We love kids.

ANTIPOLO MAYOR BAGS AWARD

Mayor Angelito Gatlabayan of Antipolo City, was recently awarded as the 2003 Most Outstanding City Mayor in Literacy in the Philippines, flanked by other winners from right, City Mayor Noel Pusol of Legazpi City, 4th runner up; City Mayor Mary Jane Ortega of San Fernando City, La Union, 3rd runner up; representative of Mayor Ramon Durano III of Davao City, 2nd runner up; Mayor Angelito Gatlaybayan with the presidential trophy and on the left, City Mayor Leonides Plaza of Butuan City, 1st runner up. On the background are DepEd, Neda, DILG, PIA, LCC officials headed by DepEd Secretary Ramon Bacani.

Touch Mobile launches Overseas Load Remittance service

WITH the Filipino overseas worker and his family in mind, Touch Mobile has come up with another revolutionary and hassle-free reloading service that allows its subscribers the receive prepaid reloads from their loved ones working or living abroad.

Through Touch Mobile's Overseas Load Remittance service, overseas Filipinos can already purchase prepaid loan from a Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) Express Remittance Center, and send these to their beneficiaries in the Philippines who are Touch Mobile's prepaid subscribers.

Initially launched at three BPI Express Remittance Centers in Hong Kong - where it was presented to different associations like Bileg Ti, Ilocano, Catholic Association (Hong Kong chapter), and Baccaraneans - the service is Touch Mobile's answer to the needs of a very substantial and growing market to always keep them in touch with their friends and families.

The service will be rolled out soon to other countries where there are available BPI Express Remittance centers, and with high number of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) such as Italy, Spain, United States, and United Kingdom.

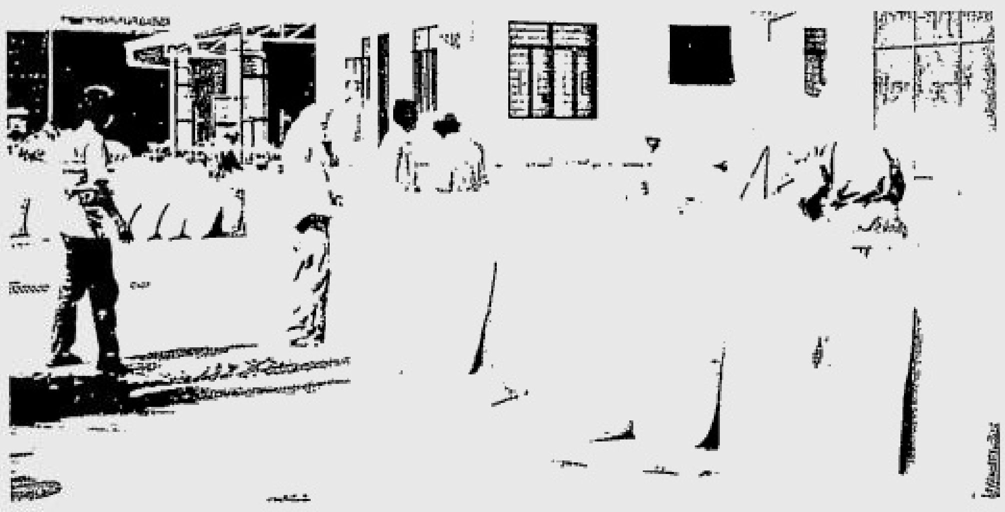
The OFW will just have to visit a BPI Express Remittance Center to purchase a prepaid reload value and specify the Touch Mobile number which he would like to load.

The transaction will then be facilitated by the BPI Express Remittance Center in seconds and will inform the Touch Mobile subscriber-recipient in the Philippines of the reload value sent to him through a text message from Touch Mobile. Available amounts are P100, P200 and P400.

With this new service, overseas Filipinos and their families are assured of uninterrupted connectivity anytime of the day.

WINNINGEST AD AGENCY

TBWA\Santiago Mangada Puno were awarded the most number of ARAW Awards, including Platinum, during the 18th Philippine Advertising Congress in Baguio City last weekend. The total tally of 17 Awards include 1 Platinum, 2 Golds, 10 Silvers, and 4 Bronzes. The awards were for their clients Absolut Vodka, Adidas, Kish Furniture, The Philippine General Hospital's Save-a-Life Foundation, The Philippine Star, Mothers for Peace by the Mindanao Council for Women, Adboard's Student Forum, Shangri-la Hotels and Resorts, and Cinemanila 2003 Festival. TBWA\SMP had 42 finalists second to BBDO with 52. Both TBWA\ and BBDO belong to the OMNICOM Group.



NFA PROCURES PALAY MAIN CROP

This scene of piles of sacks of palay that have been resacked and ready for weighing is familiar in the buying stations and warehouses of the National Food Authority as the agency pursues aggressive palay buying of the main harvest. The photo is taken at an NFA warehouse in Binalonan, Pangasinan where until the third week of November, the local office has already bought 205,656 bags of palay exceeding its 106,560 bags target for the period January to November. The NFA is confident of buying 8 million bags of palay this year as it earmarked P3.7 billion for palay procurement operation for the October to December period.

BPI SIGNS MAXICARE

The Bank of the Philippine Islands recently signed a memorandum of agreement with Maxicare. Under the agreement, Maxicare will provide BPI executives and their dependents with a comprehensive and high-quality health care program. Maxicare, which boasts an impressive list of medical specialists and facilities, is one of the premier private healthcare service providers in the country. Present during the signing are (seated from left): Lourdes Orosa, BPI vice president for employee relations; James Maloney, Maxicare president and CEO; Jesus Razon Jr., BPI senior vice president for human resources; Dr. Roberto Macasaet, Maxicare chair; and Grace Saulog, BPI senior manager for HR services. Witnessing the agreement from behind are Maxicare's Genevieve Cura, corporate accounts officer; Ronnie Francisco, VP and chief actuary; Josephine Aguilar, VP for sales and marketing; Ronald Basas, VP for finance; and Thess Olivares, manager-direct corporate sales.

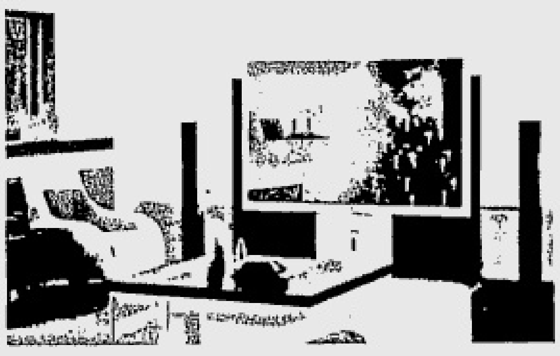
SPLASH
CORPORATION
UNIONBANK
CASH MANAGEMENT SERVICE
AGREEMENT

SPLASH APPOINTS UNIONBANK AS CASH MANAGEMENT BANK

The largest Filipino-owned beauty and personal care firm Splash Corp recently announced its appointment of UnionBank of the Philippines as its cash management bank. This agreement will initially involve the Union CheckWriter-a cash management facility of UnionBank that will allow Splash to outsource the preparation and releasing of its disbursements payables to various suppliers. The contract signing was held at the Splash office in Quezon City. Present during the Splash-UnionBank Cash Management Agreement formal signing ceremony were (seated, from left), Frederick T. Claudio, UnionBank vice president; Gula C. Lim, UnionBank executive vice president and head of corporate banking center; Dr. Rosalinda A. Hortaleza, Splash Corp vice chair and chief finance officer; Dr. Rolando B. Hortaleza, Splash Corp chair and chief executive officer; Hermie M. Pugeda, UnionBank executive vice president and head of corporate product banking and Glo L. Dazo, Splash Corp finance manager. Also present during the event were (standing, from left) Myca C. Avancena, UnionBank cash solutions manager; Jeff G. Mendoza, UnionBank relationship manager; and from Splash, Lilia D. Francisco, accounting manager.

ProductFILES

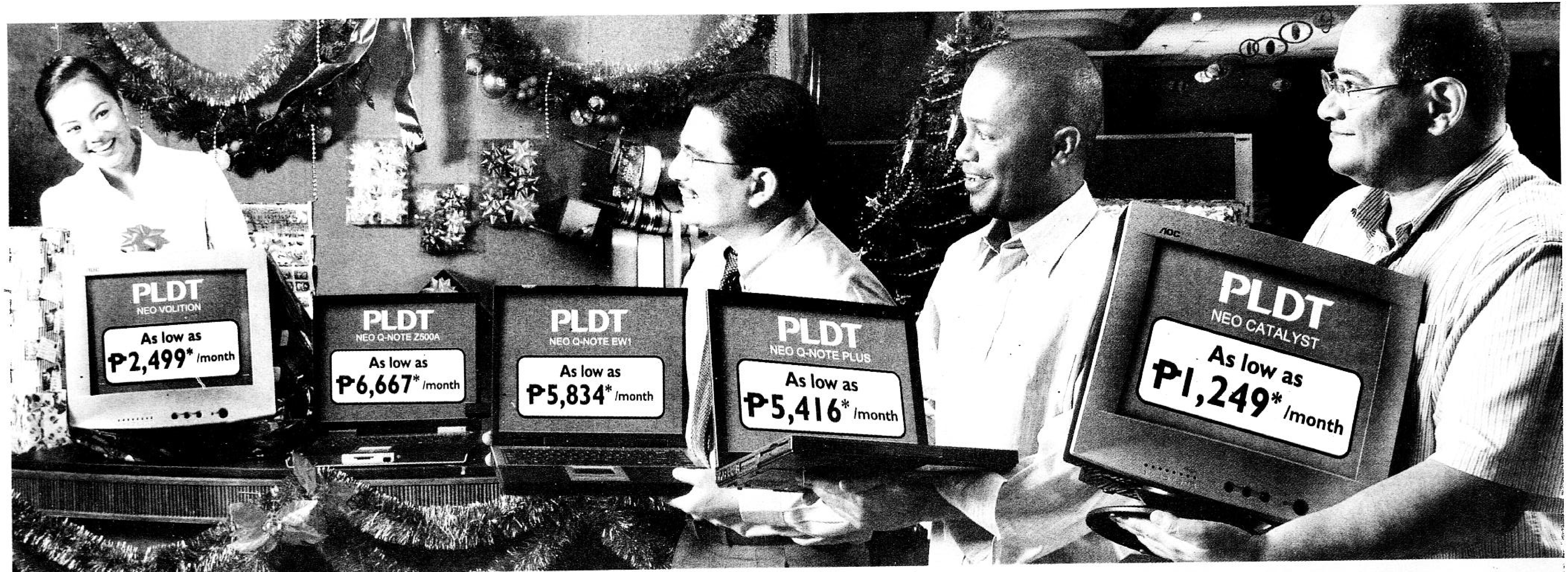
Kolin brings the latest HDTV technology



Whoever said that the Plasma TV was the best television in town? Kolin Philippines International Inc introduces the Kolin 50" LCoS (Liquid Crystal on Silicon) HDTV. It is the latest breakthrough in television technology, engineered to perfection surpassing all other HDTV in the market. LCoS delivers superior resolution, and smooth pictures even in fast motions. It has a system that provides colour quality, and brightness resulting to astoundingly cleaner and clearer, more life-like images. Being radiation-free, flicker-free, and visually pixel-free, the Kolin 50" LCoS HDTV not only has a wider viewing angle, but also operates at a low power consumption. Kolin 50" LCoS HDTV is definitely better. For more details, call (632) 852-1531 to 37. Also log on to the official website, www.kolinphil.com.ph.

PLDT Touch Card presents Gary V - Unicef call cards

IN CELEBRATION of PLDT's 75th anniversary and Gary Valenciano's 20th anniversary in the music industry, PLDT Touch Card presents the special edition Gary V - Unicef call cards. The cards come in four different designs for only P100 each. And if you buy all four designs, you will get a limited edition card case. By collecting these cards, not only can you enjoy a P3 per minute on domestic long distance but you will also be helping underprivileged children because part of the proceeds will be donated to Unicef. Your donation will provide medicines, supplies and equipment to 100 barangay health centers and 100 nutrition posts as well as fund the training of 100 rural health midwives and 200 barangay health workers. These cards are now available at the PLDT business offices, SM Malls, 7-11 and from over 9,000 authorized PLDT card agents nationwide.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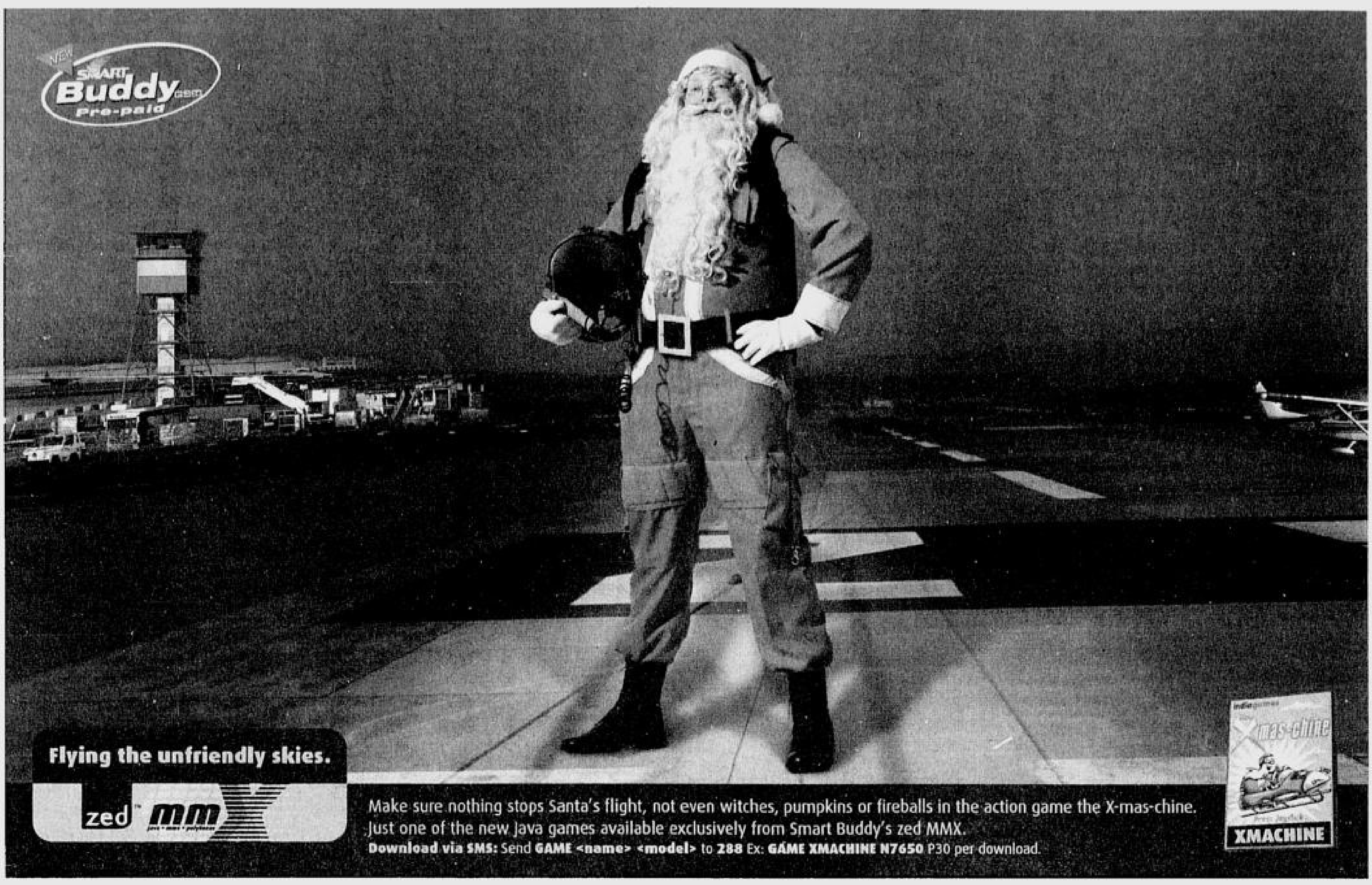
E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Louie C. Camino

DID YOU KNOW...

GMA 7 host **Miriam Quiambao** ("Extra Challenge" and "All About You" was seen lining up at the ATM of Metrobank on T. Morato in Quezon City. Because of the holiday season, there was a long queue of clients outside the ATM booth, but Miriam patiently waited for her turn, under the hot sun, to do her bank transaction. Miriam is scheduled to wed her Italian fiance next month in Boracay.

More Entertainment stories in Section C2



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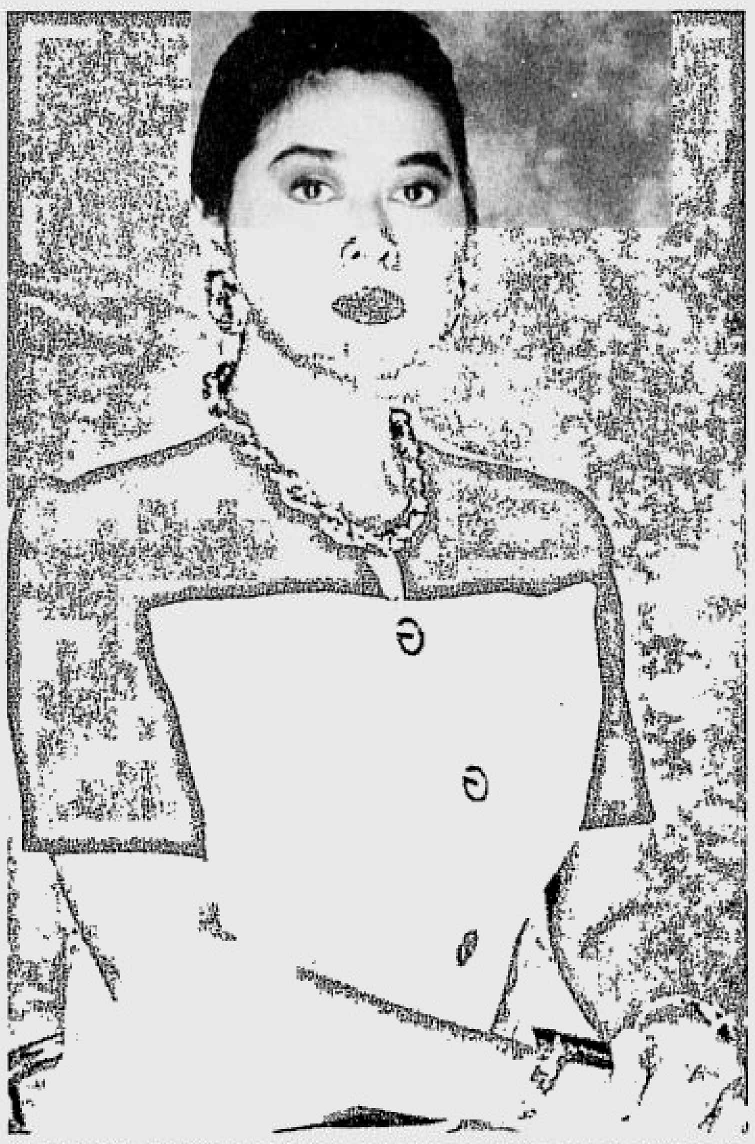
Movies take a back seat as Elizabeth runs in '04

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor



NOT TRUE, says "El Oro," that all movie stars who enter politics are the same. She's running for Bicol vice governor.

MULTI-AWARD winning and respected actress Elizabeth Oropesa will stay away from making movies because she's busy preparing for next year's elections.

"I'm running for vice governor in Bicol," Elizabeth told INQUIRER Entertainment. "Actually, before, *pinipilit na nila ako tumakbo, hindi ko tinutuloy. Mayroon ako ngayong nakilalang taong tatakbo* for governor, *'yung sasamahan ko, si* Brando Sael. *Napakaganda ng kanyang mga plano para sa mga* Albayano."

The Bicol native, who is the star of the new Gil Portes movie "Homecoming" in the Metro Manila Film Festival, deplored the way entertainers-turned-politicians are generally treated, noting that she is aware that it's something that can be used against her.

But her runningmate finally convinced her to run for public office: "If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't, because I'm scared of what people will say," she said. "*Kasi ang ipinambabato sa mga artistang tumatakbo, 'Artista lang 'yan, pare-pareho lang 'yan!' Hindi totoo 'yon.*"

Elizabeth has worn countless identities in her three decades in Philippine cinema, each of them alive and imparted with a truthfulness that surges forth from the naturally talented actress.

Enhancing presence

Her longevity in show biz and her versatility with radically different personas have earned her respect from fans and peers alike, further adding to her already productive career, which is bedecked by different awards and nominations from various local award-giving bodies. Always, movies that include her are enhanced by her presence, and the new Gil Portes film "Homecoming" is no exception.

"Homecoming" is already generating positive buzz. Elizabeth plays mother to Alessandra de Rossi's SARS-afflicted character.

Elizabeth said she was pleasantly astounded with the young actress' demeanor, both onscreen and off-screen.

"Believe it or not, *hindi ko ine*-expect *na magiging ganoon kami ka*-close," she said of herself and the young star.

"The little girl is bratty," she added, smiling. "I was surprised because despite her being bratty, *magalang 'yung bata. Iginalang ako* right away. *Parang ang tingin ko,* front *niya lang ang pagiging supladita, kasi napakalambot at napakalambing sa akin niyan.*

"*At napaka*-professional. *Hindi nagpapahintay. Alam ang linya, at kapag may gustong matutunan, nagtatanong. Bukod sa nag-*

MOVIES/ C2

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER. Oropesa and Alessandra de Rossi in Gil Portes' "Homecoming," where the young star's pleasant demeanor surprised the former

GONZALES-ROMUALDEZ with daughter Sofia

Cristina's new world

/C6

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TOMB Solve an ancient Egyptian puzzle.
ASTEROID A dangerous mission to Jupiter.
ANGEL Get back to heaven by jumping on clouds
BABES Free the girl by breaking the wall!
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BRING Rescue soldiers from the enemy's territory
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When frontal nudity leads to affront—and confrontation

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

The bone of contention this time is a sexy magazine

ALL of a sudden, frontal nudity is in the show biz news again these days. For a change, the bone of contention this time isn't a soft-core flick, but a sexy magazine that features some bold stars photographed in the nude.

At first, people seemed to take the frontal nudity equably enough, but the whole deal became controversial when the boldies guested on TV to talk about their brazen poses.

The sexy photos weren't shown on TV, but the sexy stars' descriptive fairly sizzled, and left a bad taste in the mouth. If the sexy magazine was for adults only, why was it being plugged on daytime TV, when there were many children watching?

Soon enough, the boldies became the victims of their own misplaced enthusiasm. Even some show biz veterans said that a number of the photos struck them as "soft-porn."

Things came to a head when one of the ecdysiasts, **Maui Taylor**, complained to Sen. **Loren Legarda** that one of her poses in the magazine wasn't authorized. In addition, some women's groups started complaining about exploitation, females being used as sex objects, etc.

Things got so hot that public forum shows on TV began discussing the issue. Some of the boldies insisted that they weren't being exploited, and pointed out that the magazine was being published only as a limited edition.

But that didn't placate its critics, who pointed out that even if only one copy had been printed, it could easily find its way to the Internet, where its controversial contents could quickly be duplicated, many times over, for all the world to ogle at.

The controversy's resolution is still unclear as of this writing, but it looks like the ecdysiasts are getting more than they bargained for. If concerned citizens use this as a springboard for more general reforms, it could lead to changes in the presentation of nudity beyond the specific focus of the controversial magazine itself.

That's what happens when frontal nudity leads to affront—and confrontation!

'Fellowship' on HBO

TOLKIEN'S "Lord of the Rings" novels have been brought to life by **Peter Jackson**, by way of a three-part film series, the final installment of which has just been released in the States. Now, the first installment, "Fellowship of the Ring," is being shown on HBO—at 10:30 p.m. on Dec. 21, 1:30 p.m. on Dec. 26 and 9 p.m. on Dec. 31.

The first film transports viewers to an entirely different reality, immerses them in it, and maroons them in the alternative world of Middle Earth.

It chronicles the formation of the "fellowship"—a group of nine consisting of four hobbits, two noblemen, an elf, a dwarf and a wizard. They help a young hobbit, Frodo Baggins (**Elijah Wood**) destroy a gold ring that possesses startling powers. The ring, forged by the Dark Lord, Sauron, is capable of corrupting its wearer.

But the ring must be destroyed at its place of origin, the crags of Mount Doom, before Sauron's minions find it and return it to their master, who intends to use it to cast a dark and deadly spell over Middle Earth, and all of the men, hobbits, elves, dwarves and other fantastic creatures that live there.

Elijah Wood plays Frodo with an endearing blend of feisty spirit and wide-eyed innocence. Other important characters are portrayed by **Viggo Mortensen** (Aragorn), **Orlando Bloom** (Legolas), **Ian McKellen** (Gandalf), **Liv Tyler**, **Cate Blanchett** and **Christopher Lee**.

Dreamscape treats

DREAMSCAPE at Robinsons Galleria has prepared a variety of Yuletide treats, highlighted by a meet-and-greet session with Santa Claus from Dec. 25 to 28 from noontime to 1 p.m., 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., and 4p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Center Stage area.

On Dec. 21, performers from Kids@Play Center for Arts and Development present the musicale "The 12 Days of Christmas." On Dec. 22 and 29 at 4 p.m. Dreamscape welcomes the Sampaguita Performing Group from Great Britain. This ensemble of youths from four to 16 is known for its song and dance performances.

On Christmas Day and Dec. 26, "comedy magician" **Rizalino John Esguerra** stages "The Magic of Christmas" at 1 p.m.

Other Dreamscape activities: live string quartet performances by LSJ Strings on Dec. 26 and 28, and drum and lyre performances on Dec. 22, 25, 27, 29, and Jan. 1, 2004, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Movies take back seat as Elizabeth…

From page C1

tatanong, nakikinig. Hanga ako."

1st wedding anniversary

The veteran actress considers "Homecoming" an important film, as it shows all-too-real human frailties, brought about by the threat of the unknown, as well as the strength of love amidst these travails.

"*Dito, makikita kung paano i-*ostracize *ng kapwa niya Pilipino 'yung mag taong siya na ngang biktima. Doon mo makikita 'yung ugali natin kung minsan na kapag may bagay na hindi maunawaan, kinatatakutan kaagad.*"

Elizabeth has been busy working on a regular TV show, the new teledrama "Te Amo", with Argentinian actor Segundo Cernadas. This will air in January on GMA 7.

"I play the stepmother of Iza Calzado," she said. "I'm funny there. I'm always drunk. I'm there four days a week. Focused *ako rito.*"

Last Nov. 8 was the first anniversary of her marriage to Joel Valdez, a physical therapist younger than she.

"He has to get used to the fact that I'm always out of town or out of the house," she said, chuckling. "But he's fun. He makes himself busy, and at the same time, he keeps up with what I'm doing, by talking to me and by waiting for me. When I come home, he makes it a point to find out what's

MOVIES/ C6

CENTEX
(Center for Excellence in Public Elementary Education)
presents
The Special
Advance Screening of
THE
LORD OF THE RINGS
THE RETURN OF THE KING
December 20, 2003 (Saturday)
Glorietta 4, Cinema 6
8:30 pm
Tickets are available at
the Glorietta 4 Cinema Ticketbooth.
Ticket Price: P450 / Guaranteed Seats
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)
PIONEER FILMS Globe

THE LORD OF THE RINGS
THE RETURN OF THE KING

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PERFORMS ON DEC. 23, 2003 to JAN. 4, 2004

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Dec.25 - 4:30pm, 8pm
Dec.26 - 4:30pm, 8pm
Dec.27 - 1pm, 4:30pm, 8pm
Dec.28 - 1pm, 4:30pm, 8pm
Dec.29 - 4:30pm, 8pm
Dec.30 - 1pm, 4:30pm, 8pm
Jan. 1 - 4:30pm, 8pm
Jan. 2 - 4:30pm, 8pm
Jan. 3 - 1pm, 4:30pm, 8 pm
Jan. 4 - 1pm, 4:30pm, 8pm

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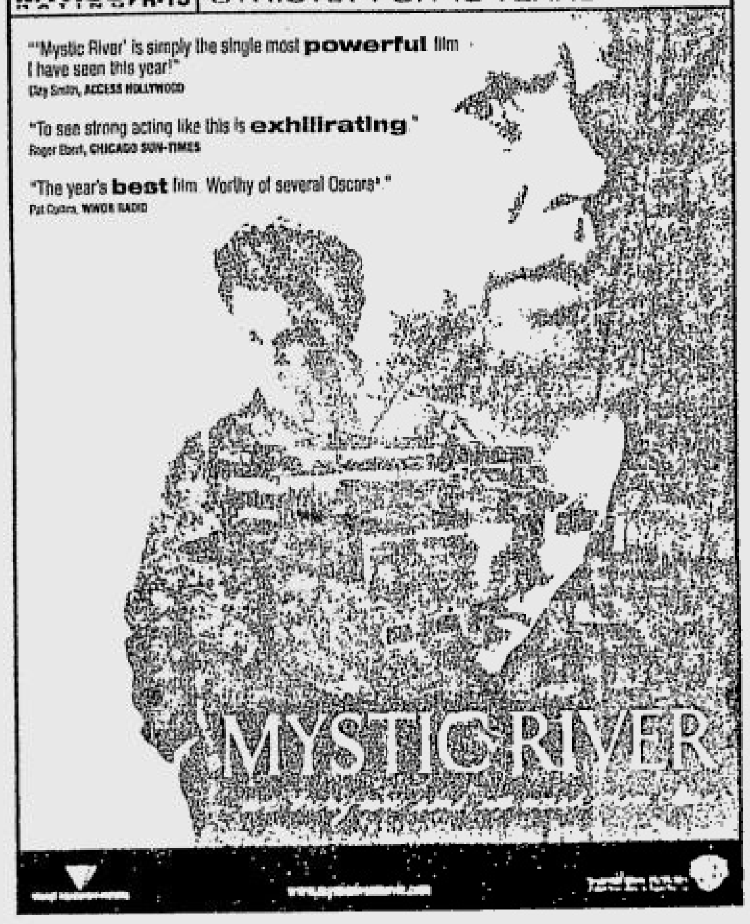
Clay Smith, ACCESS HOLLYWOOD
"To see strong acting like this is **exhilirating**."
Roger Ebert, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES
"The year's **best** film. Worthy of several Oscars*."
Pat Collins, WWOR RADIO



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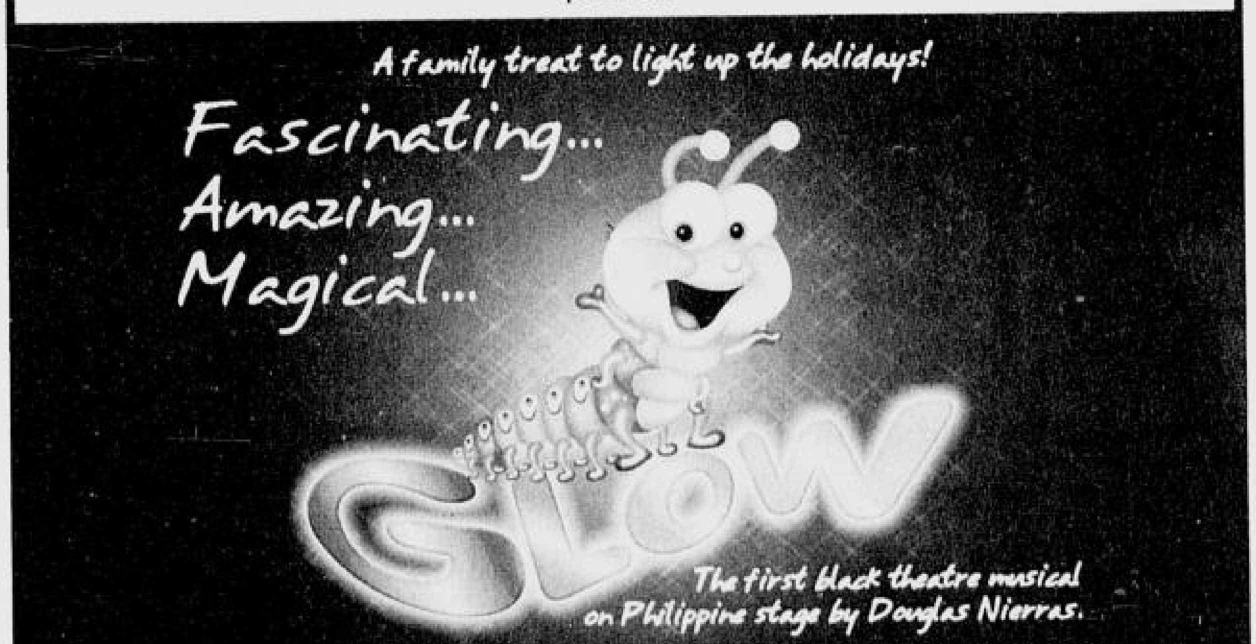

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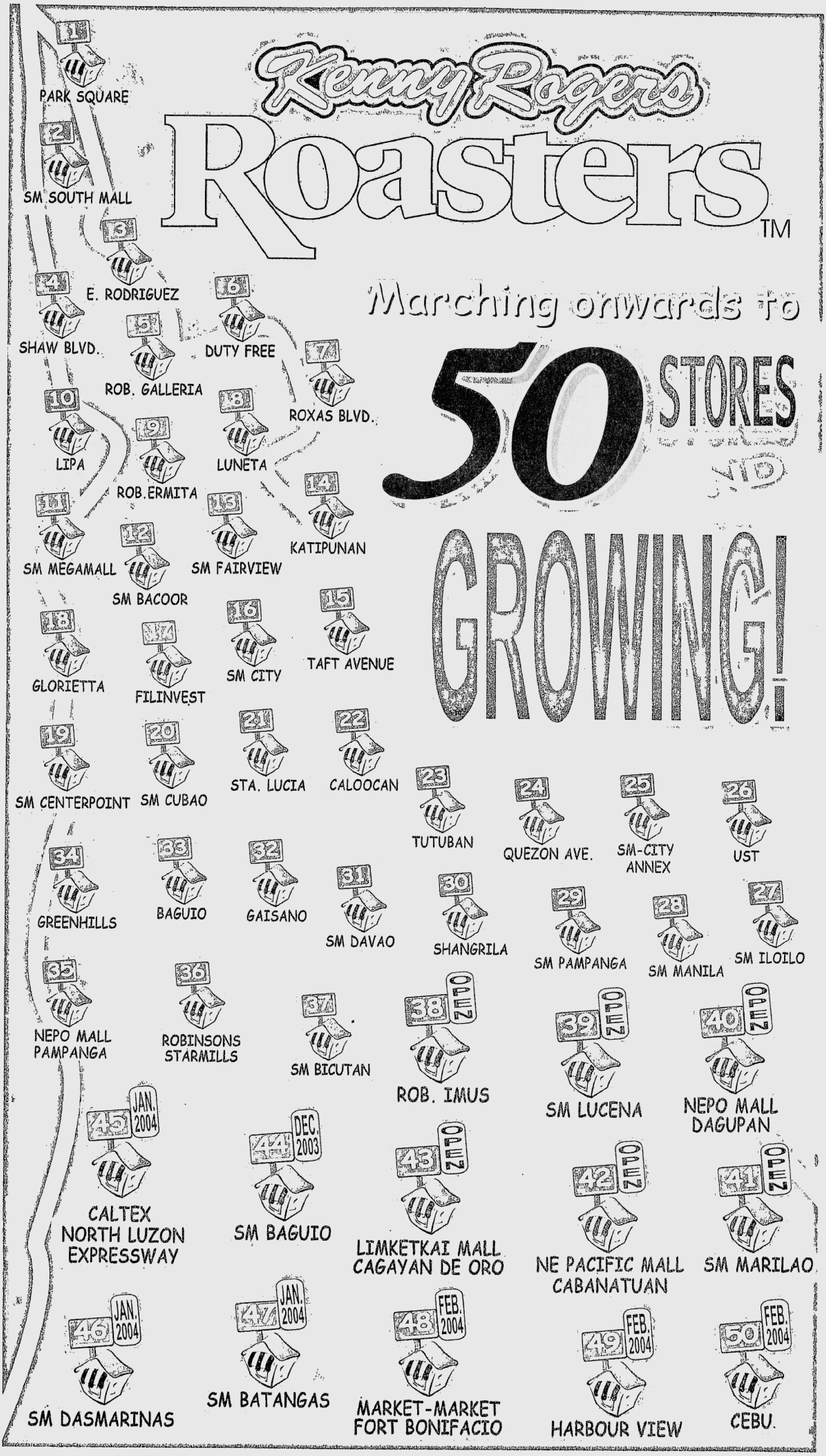
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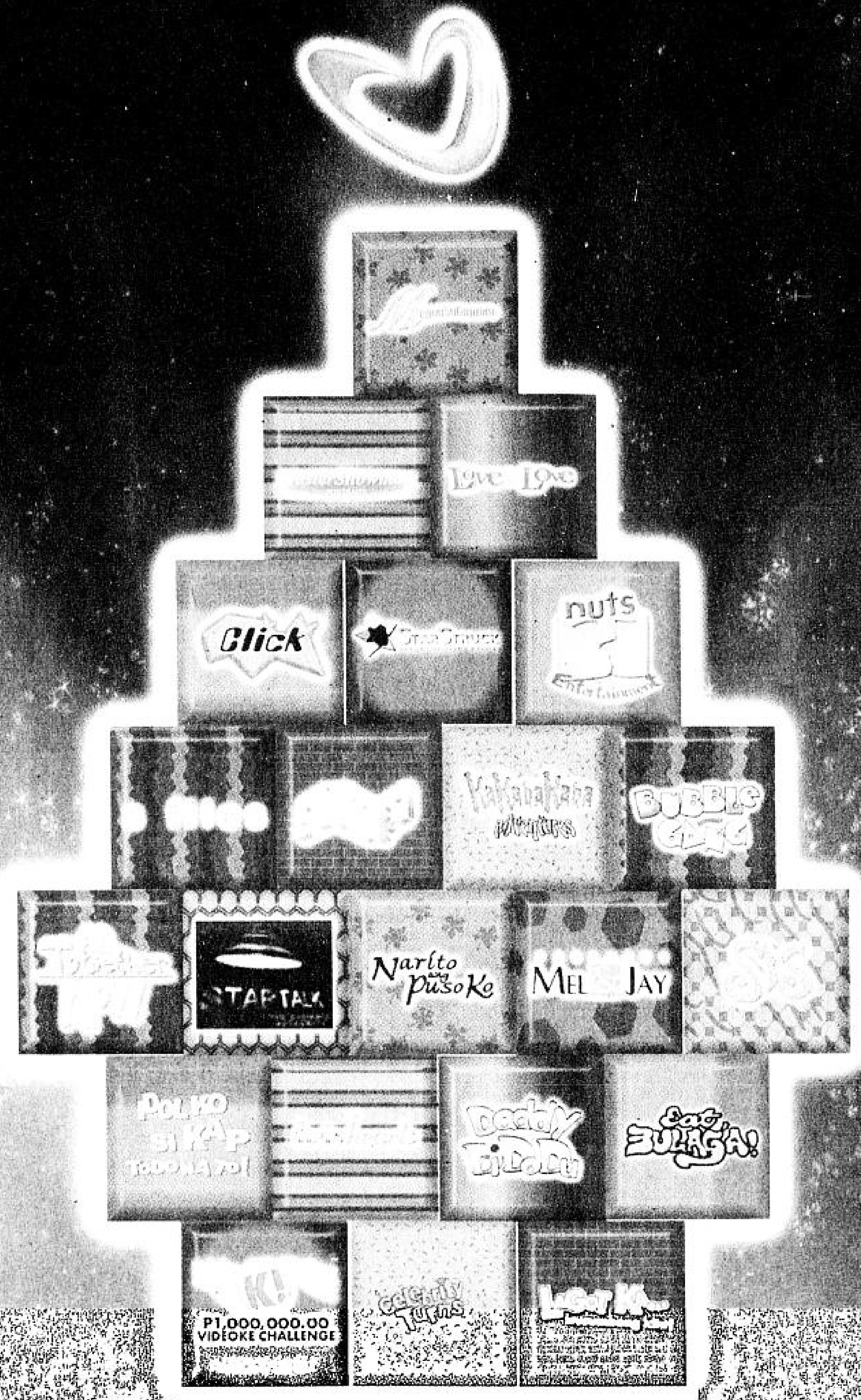
40 OPEN NEPO MALL DAGUPAN
41 OPEN SM MARILAO
42 OPEN NE PACIFIC MALL CABANATUAN
43 OPEN LIMKETKAI MALL CAGAYAN DE ORO
44 DEC. 2003 SM BAGUIO
45 JAN. 2004 CALTEX NORTH LUZON EXPRESSWAY
46 JAN. 2004 SM DASMARINAS
47 JAN. 2004 SM BATANGAS
48 FEB. 2004 MARKET-MARKET FORT BONIFACIO
49 FEB. 2004 HARBOUR VIEW
50 FEB. 2004 CEBU.

PASKONG KAPUSO NA!

MGA PABORITO MONG ARTISTA...

MAGSASAMA-SAMA!

At imbitado kayo sa isang engrandeng salu-salo


Love to Love
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Bubble Gang
STARTALK
Narito ang Puso Ko
MEL JAY
Daddy Di Do Du
Eat Bulaga!
P1,000,000.00 VIDEOKE CHALLENGE
Celebrity Turns

Salu-salong Krismas

Walang Kasinsaya... Walang Kasing-ningning...
Walang Kasingkulay

MAMAYA NANG
9:30 PM

Dahil ikaw KAPUSO, ang Star ng aming Pasko!

GMA

Getting reacquainted with the Appeals Committee

JUICE

Jo-Ann Q. Maglipon

(Last of two parts)

SOMEONE asked why I should be writing abc .. the Appeals Committee at this time.

Well, because it is little known that the Appeals Committee is out *there*, yet it can make or break the precarious space where free expression sits.

And because it is also little known that this month—two good years after the bulk of its members resigned following revelations of wrongdoing by **Erap**—it has convened, with a new set of members, to review the film "Alipin."

Its existence

Under FVR, the Appeals Committee went through birth pangs you wouldn't believe. Agitation everywhere, punctuated only by the occasional relief, surrounded its birthing and hounded it right up to the time of Erap.

And the one lesson that kept jumping out of all that was this—Whether the Appeals Committee had it good or bad was completely the doing of the MTRCB, a body it was, quite strictly, independent of, and with which it shared only this: both were under the Office of the President.

Good meant the Appeals convened only to review touch-and-go films that the MTRCB could not abide. *Good* was when the country's censors had the wherewithal to see through a different and difficult film, and find there the art within.

Bad was when the censors started posturing like critics and throwing "X" ratings all over the place. But especially *bad* was when they cowered before institutional pressure. (Read: Church.)

In practice, this would mean that the less often the Appeals was called in to review a film, the more gainful the atmosphere was for the arts.

Or so we thought we could assume. But for a time now, that assumption has been more than upset.

Producers—paranoid about losing out on their P12-P15 million investment, the average cost of a movie these days—have hacked away at their own films. Especially after the film failed to pass an MTRCB first review committee, a producer almost always hacked at his own movie before presenting it to a second, and final, review committee.

For anyone seriously admiring of art, and the freedoms that alone ensure art, this is horrible.

Immediately, an environment has arisen where an artist has to second-guess what a bunch of people—often enough *not* artists, and most likely not as impassioned—will pass.

And this he does to keep his producer from folding up, to keep from being called a jinx in the industry, and to keep those jobs coming for him in the future. So he adjusts. He downplays the experimentation. Screens the message. Shortens the scene. Anesthesizes the dialogue. Goes slow with the unaccustomed thought.

It's disastrous.

And makes a farce out of classification.

"Alipin"

If the director doesn't give up the fight, then the producer most certainly will. He who put in P15 million will do everything it takes to get his film shown—including volunteering to have his film become any or all of these: shortened, stretched, dismembered, crippled, straightjacketed, butchered, or mummified.

Whatever it takes.

Ask **Jeturian** about "Tuhog," **Aguiluz** about "Biyaheng Langit," and **Diaz** about "Hesus Rebolusyonaryo." Actually, ask any director hereabouts.

This month, another test case for classification came along. And once again, this country failed the test.

The current Appeals Committee—chair: **Cerge Rimonde**; members: **Daniel Victoria** and myself—sat down to review Vincent Films' "Alipin."

After the first MTRCB review committee gave it an "X," the producer, **Naty Cheng**, sent the MTRCB the same film for a second review. But this time, she also sent the MTRCB a letter saying she had already "voluntarily deleted" some scenes.

Enumerating them, she said: From Reel 1, she was shortening the love scene and kissing scene; from Reel II, she was deleting the pubic-hair exposure and shortening two more love scenes; from Reel III, she was shortening two other love scenes; and from Reel IV, she was also shortening the flashback love scene.

Well, I don't know what was so "voluntary" about any of that. The scenes she dismembered were the very same scenes that the MTRCB first review committee had declared objectionable.

Worse, by the time she sent the movie for review by the Appeals, she was so paranoid that she had cut it up some more, this time based on the objections of the MTRCB second review committee.

She must have: The film was now down to just one hour and 10 minutes!

I am not saying here that "Alipin" was a good film. It was most certainly not. From story to characterization to plot to production design to cinematography to music, it clearly had no ambitions, or pretenses, to being a work of art. It was a skin flick, period.

But the Appeals Committee passed it with an "R"—Strictly for Adults—in effect, overturning the MTRCB's "X."

Why?

Because the Appeals was not constituted to be a critics' circle. The artistic taste of its members—presuming, of course, we had some—could not bear on its judgment. The religious preferences of its members could not impinge on the film. And any other standards and definitions its members may have had about culture had to give way to its main task, which was to decipher whether the film violated the Constitution in any way. If the film did not, then it should reach an audience that would decide whether to pay good money to watch it. The audience could always turn away anyway.

No tradition

This is not to say that a film has a guaranteed better chance with the Appeals Committee.

Surely, "Schindler's" did under chair **Tito Guingona**, "Priest" did under chair **Renato Corona**, and "Scorpio Nights 2" did under chair **Sonny Ramirez**.

And surely, there were more works that escaped the scissors, or were saved from an outright ban, because the Appeals Committee would not be scared by the MTRCB's exhortations about "prolonged, gratuitous scenes arousing prurient interest," its favorite warning device.

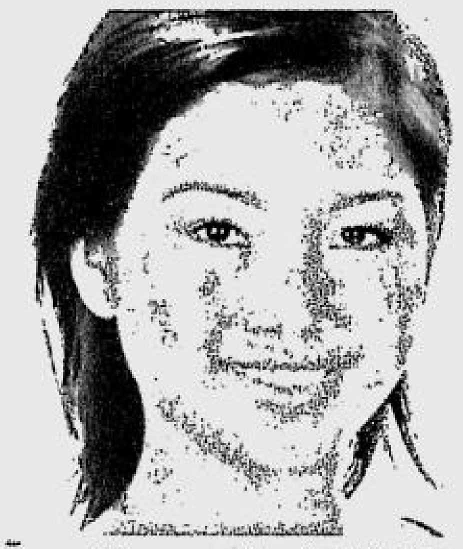
But the Appeals, as a body, has no tradition of bias for the artist, or unwavering respect for speech and expression, to speak of.

It has no preamble announcing that it exists to keep art alive, no rules hinting that it is there to explore the limits of current community standards, and no record proving that it is sworn to protect the right of everyone to think differently.

Everything just depends on who is in it—and that changes with every President.

What doesn't change, it seems to me, is that we aren't a people very kind to our artists. Maybe our sin is that we are too Catholic—when we ought to be more catholic.

'Star in a Million' now an album



REGIS

SANTOS

"STAR IN a Million," the top-rating talent search on ABS-CBN, is now an album.

Now you can enjoy listening to new rising stars Christian Bautista, Gayle Dizon, Czarina Rosales, Marinel Santos, DK Tijam, Michell San Miguel, Teresa Garcia, Sheryn Mae Regis, Johann Escañal and Eric Santos, all from "Star in a Million," anytime, anywhere.

Produced by songwriter and album producer Jonathan Manalo, the Star in a Milllion album features an eclectic mix showcasing the different vocal capabilities of all 10 finalists, with music ranging from classical to alternative, R&B to pop, and ballad to jazz.

Classic hits like "Say That You Love Me," "I Can't Tell You Why," "In My Life," "Come in Out of the Rain," "You," "If I Didn't Love You," "Bukas na Lang Kita Mamahalin," "Run to You," "I Love You Goodbye," and "I Believe I Can Fly" all have been given new flavor.

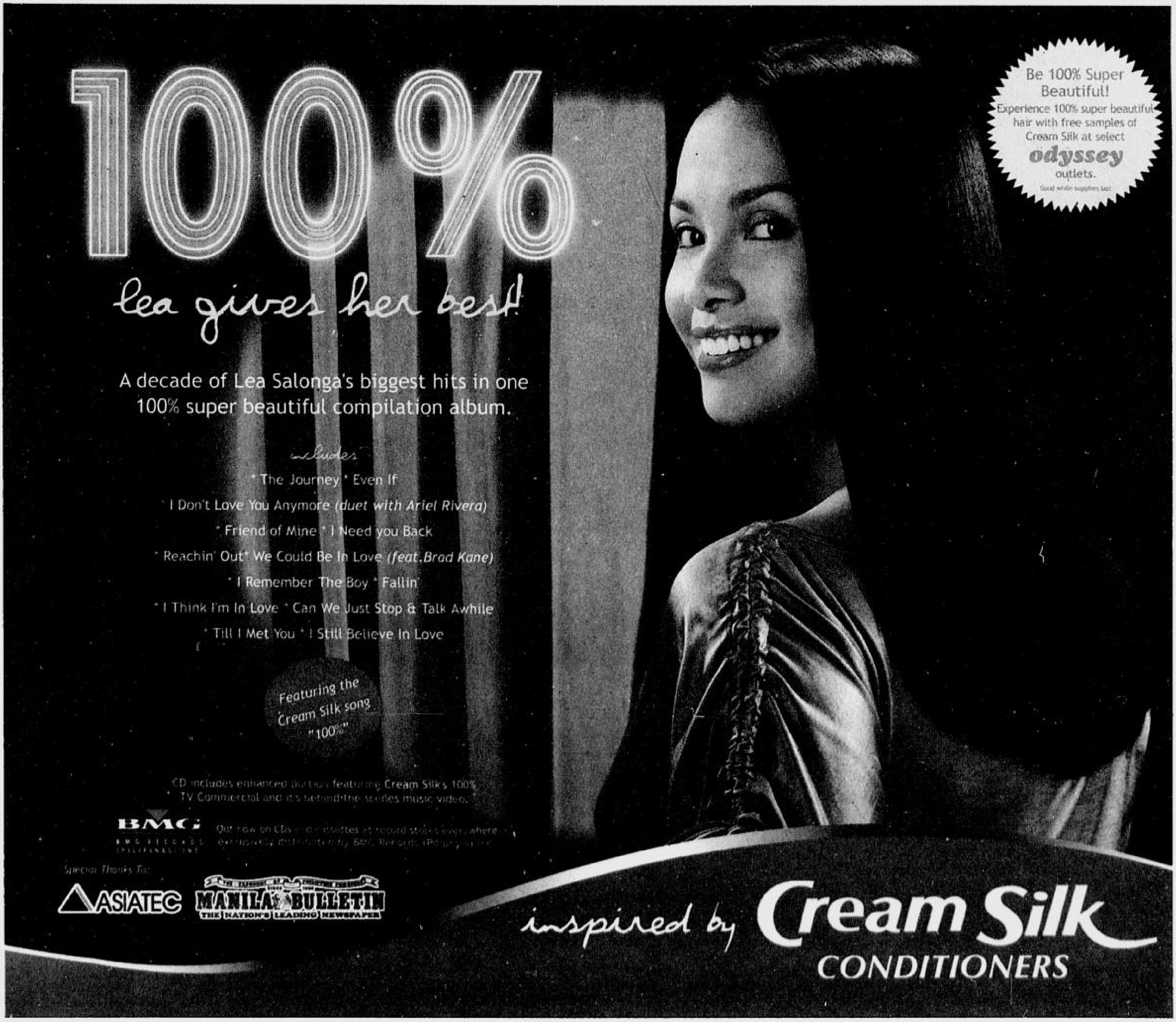
The CD includes a free VCD of the music videos of all 10 finalists.

The "Star in a Million" album was launched at the Megastrip A at SM Megamall yesterday, with the finalists performing their singles in the album.

Today, watch the finalists on "ASAP Mania," where, due to the positive public reaction, the "Star in a Million" segment became a full show.

Shown every Saturday on ABS-CBN at 5:30 p.m., "Star in a Million" aims to groom new singing stars to become the future Martin Nievera, Gary Valenciano, Regine Velasquez and other big stars.

The "Star in a Million" album is available on CDs and cassettes at record stores nationwide, from Star Records.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* I Think I'm In Love * Can We Just Stop & Talk Awhile
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CONDITIONERS

RMN heard loud and clear in 2003

RMN, the country's largest radio network, posted superior ratings in Malaybalay, Naga, Cebu, Surigao, Dipolog, Pagadian, Cagayan, Iligan and Davao, said the recent surveys by the Philippine Survey and Research Council and the Radio Research Council. I FM also topped the ratings, notably stations in Laoag, Baguio and Iligan.

RMN and I FM introduced during the year exciting contests and promos, including the Agiw na Dagupan concert, bloddletting activity with the Philippine Red Cross, and Donate-a-Book drive with Francisco Balagtas Elementary School as beneficiary.

Established in 1954 by Henry R. Canoy, RMN, then labeled DXCC and based in Cagayan de Oro City, revolutionized the way we listen to radio. It paved the way for excellence in broadcasting. RMN has 50 FM and AM stations all over the country, all following one mantra: "At your service wherever you are."

FIRST LIFE & "FIRST LADY." Coyiuto promotes life insurance in the movie, where Susan Roces plays an insurance beneficiary.

Life insurance in 'Mano Po 2'

SHOW TIME

FIRST Life teams up with the "Empress."

First Guarantee Life Assurance Co. Inc., or First Life, a leading local life insurance firm and an arm of the Coyiuto Group of Companies, has tied up with Regal Entertainment Inc. in "Mano Po 2," an official entry in the annual Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) which starts on Christmas Day.

First Life president and CEO Peter Coyiuto said he took the opportunity to work in cooperation with Regal's "Mother" Lily Monteverde, the "Empress of Philippine movies," to promote awareness of the value of life insurance among Filipino moviegoers.

Regal producer Roselle Monteverde-Teo gave full support to the First Life campaign in "Mano Po 2," Coyiuto said.

In the movie, the Filipino wife Sol, played by veteran actress Susan Roces, receives the benefits of the insurance on the life of taipan Antonio Chui, played by multiawarded drama actor Christopher de Leon.

Coyiuto said he believes that the epic drama about the members of a traditional Filipino-Chinese family is a good medium to highlight the need to be insured for life.

Coyiuto described life insurance as "the most beautiful product ever created by mankind."

"It is only life insurance that takes such a small portion of your money in good times and gives back so much in bad times, unlike banking and other financial products that take more in good times and give less in bad times," Coyiuto explains. "Real service cannot be bought nor measured with money, but only with sincerity and integrity."

"Mano Po 2" once again captures the virtues of the family and the cultural diversity of the Philippines, Coyiuto notes in his statement.

The insurance executive said he hopes that with more Filipinos appreciating the merits of life insurance, the industry will grow and in turn help in nation-building.

"Mano Po 2" is Regal Films' follow-up to the 2002 MMFF Best Picture, "Mano Po."

"Mano Po 2" is directed by Erik Matti from a screenplay by Roi Iglesias and Mother Lily.

Bong invites street kids, orphans to 'Captain Barbell'

ABOUT 1,300 street children and orphans from different charitable institutions in the National Capital Region (NCR) will be treated to a special screening of "Captain Barbell," Premiere Productions' Metro Manila Filmfest entry this year, on Tuesday, Dec. 23, 3 p.m., at Cinema 10 of the SM Megamall.

The institutions that gave their wards the chance to view "Captain Barbell" include Nayon Ng Kabataan, home for victims of child labor; Ahon Center House, halfway house for street children; and Marilac Hills, home for girls in conflict with the law.

The invitation was sent through Social Welfare and Development Sec. Dinky Soliman.

Bong Revilla, who plays Captain Barbell, thought of inviting the children to watch the movie even before its opening day on Dec. 25.

Bong recalled that last year, he also brought street children to watch his MMFF 2002 entry, "Agimat, Anting Anting Ni Lola," from Imus Productions.

"I couldn't forget the happiness I saw on their faces after they watched the movie," Bong said. "Then and there, I knew I had a winner."

Indeed, that movie was the box-office topnotcher during last year's festival.

"Agimat," Bong continued, "was a good movie. But I think 'Captain Barbell' is better. *Ipinagmamalaki ko ang pelikula kong ito* not only because of its 212 special effects, but because *napakaganda ng* movie. *Lutang na lutang ang istorya nito.*"

Directed by Mac Alejandre, "Captain Barbell" features two other well-known Pinoy superheroes, Darna and Lastikman. Together, the three superheroes take the herculean task of saving mankind.

Regine Velasquez, herself a box-office star, plays Darna who, in one scene, dreams of helping Captain Barbell, with whom she is in love.

PJ Malonzo plays Lastikman.

Ogie Alcasid is Enteng, the janitor at the school where Regine is a teacher and who becomes the alter ego of Captain Barbell.

Three other super powers but on the wrong side of the fence are featured in Captain Barbell: Dagampat (Taong Daga), portrayed by Jeffrey Quizon; Freezy (Rufa Mae Quinto) and Lagablab (Albert Martinez).

AMAZING GRACE. Cristina Gonzales-Romualdez with her daughters Sofia (left) and Diana in the Patio Victoria garden

Cristina's new world: motherhood and Patio Victoria

MOTHERHOOD is one of life's greatest miracles, says former actress Cristina Gonzalez-Romualdez.

"My daughters changed me in so many ways," says Cristina, the mother of Sofia, 4, and Diana, 6 months old. "I am continually amazed at how two little innocent girls can make me try harder to be a better person just by looking into their eyes."

Married to former Leyte congressman Alfred Romualdez for the past five years, Cristina describes herself as a patient and understanding wife and mother.

"Marriage and motherhood are all about compromise," she says. "A woman has to learn to adjust to her family's needs. I believe that my main job as a wife and mother is to be the anchor, to always be there for them no matter what happens."

These days, Cristina, known for her angelic face and shapely body in the movies, happily balances home and career as president of Patio Victoria, a popular venue for weddings located at 5435 Gen. Luna corner Victoria Streets in Intramuros, Manila.

With two gardens named after her two daughters and an air-conditioned banquet hall that can accommodate a total of 1,000 guests, Patio Victoria is a one-stop wedding destination. It is a landmark in Intramuros, with huge wooden gates, cobblestone paths, airy gazebos and an old-fashioned fountain.

Patio Victoria's wedding experts will do everything for their brides—from the venue's decor, the flowers at the wedding and reception venues, the floral arrangements for the bride and the entourage, the food, to little details such as the guest book, wine for the toasts and even parking for guests.

Cristina says Patio Victoria is for the bride who wants romance on her wedding day but also wants to stay within a budget.

"We will never sacrifice quality," she vows. "But we also want the couple to be happy in terms of not having to spend so much. At Patio Victoria, our commitment is to give every bride a memorable wedding."

Packages start at P80,500, inclusive of use of venue, a choice of menu, one round of softdrinks, elegant arrangement of gazebo, skirting for tables and chairs, torch parade, flowers, signature frame, guest book, three-tiered fondant cake, cage and a pair of doves, house wine for the couple, complimentary use of Cristina Suite and free exclusive parking slots.

For more information, call 526-1953, 523-6940 and 527-8006, e-mail at inquiries@patiovictoria.com or check out www.patiovictoria.com.

'Return of the Kings' special screenings at Greenbelt, Glorietta

IT IS the most anticipated movie event of the season, the most awaited news for the thousands of Lord of the Rings fans: The Return of The King is upon us.

The final installment in the J.R.R. Tolkien trilogy, "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King," will have its regular run in January 2004, but for those who can't wait, there's even better news: The Ayala Cinemas have been hosting separate advance screenings of the movie, the final batch of which is Dec. 20 to 22.

Apart from these premiere showings, starting this Christmas until the regular run of the movie, fans can also get special LOTR3 collectibles when they watch any movie at any of the Ayala Cinemas—Greenbelt 1 and 3, Glorietta 4 and 1 and Alabang Town Center.

The remaining Return of the King special screenings are on Dec. 21 at Greenbelt 1 Onstage, sponsored by Bread of Life, and on Dec. 22 at Glorietta 4.

More cool and exciting activities have been lined up by the Ayala Cinemas when LOTR3 starts its run in January.

Movies take . . .

From page C2

going on with my life."

Secrets

Keeping healthy is a must for Elizabeth, who practices various Chinese martial arts disciplines and yoga exercises to stay young-looking and energetic: "*Kahit gaano ako ka-busy, ginagawan ko ng paraan na sa loob ng isang linggo, kahit dalawang beses, makapag*-exercise ako. *Maraming klase ng* exercises, *depende sa oras. Puwedeng chi-gong, puwedeng tai chi, puwedeng* stretching *lang.* Or *'pag maraming oras*, weights."

She also shared some secrets to her thirty-plus years in the business. "*Napakasimple*," she said. "*Kung susundin ang lahat, basta mayroon kang kaunting* talent, *mapapatagal mo ang buhay ng* career *mo sa* show business *sa pamamagitan ng pagiging* focused *at* professional.

"First and foremost, *kailangang palagi kang* on time. *Pangalawa, dapat alam mo ang mga linya mo, at ang linya ng kapwa mo artista.*"

These have led her to many victories in the acting field, and she's very grateful for all these accolades. "*Awa ng Diyos, marami-rami rin naman*," she modestly said of her awards.

SONGS AND SURPRISES. Kyla (above) sings, while (from left) John Lloyd Cruz, Cindy Kurleto, Sarah Meier and KC Montero give away raffle prizes.

Celebrities, prizes at MTV Youth Fair

SHOW TIME

FROM the celebrities and performers who graced the event to the prizes that were given away, the MTV Youth Fair was the perfect event for the youth to express their sense of fun and individuality.

VJs Sarah Meier, Cindy Kurleto, Patty, KC and Mark Abaya led the festivities, with Caco keeping the crowd giddy with excitement.

The crowd was treated to raffles and other thrilling activities featuring celebrity guests such as Illac Diaz, Robin da Roza, TJ Manotoc, plus music by Nina, Arnee, Kyla, 7 Shots, Rivermaya and True Faith, and a hip-hop party with DJ Jon Herrera.

A fashion show introducing Penshoppe's new collections was also presented.

Booths showcasing the sponsors' products and services were set up at the Glorietta Activity Center.

The My Scene booth had a unique exhibit of dolls styled and dressed up by celebrities and fashion icons like Tessa Prieto-Valdes, Rajo Laurel, Tim Yap, Angel Jacob, Epi Quizon, Toni Taus, stylists Kate Torralba and Rosario Herrera plus MTV VJs Sarah Meier, KC Montero and Mark Abaya.

Also featured were dolls dressed as Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake, Christina Aguilera, Shakira, Mariah Carey and Regine Velasquez, among others.

The Pepsi area featured the joust with celebrities such as April Tolentino, Shaan Bermudez, Vince Hizon, Geoff Rodriguez, Lexi Schulze and Greg Martin playing gladiators for the afternoon.

The Globe Gentext booth catered to movie buffs with games and movie passes for "Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" as prizes.

Other special prizes from sponsors such as Motorola, Nescafé, My Scene, Pond's, Pepsi Blue, Close-Up, Penshoppe, Gentext, Sunsilk and Equitable were also raffled off.

Motorola gave away two cellular phones, the E380 and the E365, much to the delight of the afternoon crowd at the Glorietta in Makati City.

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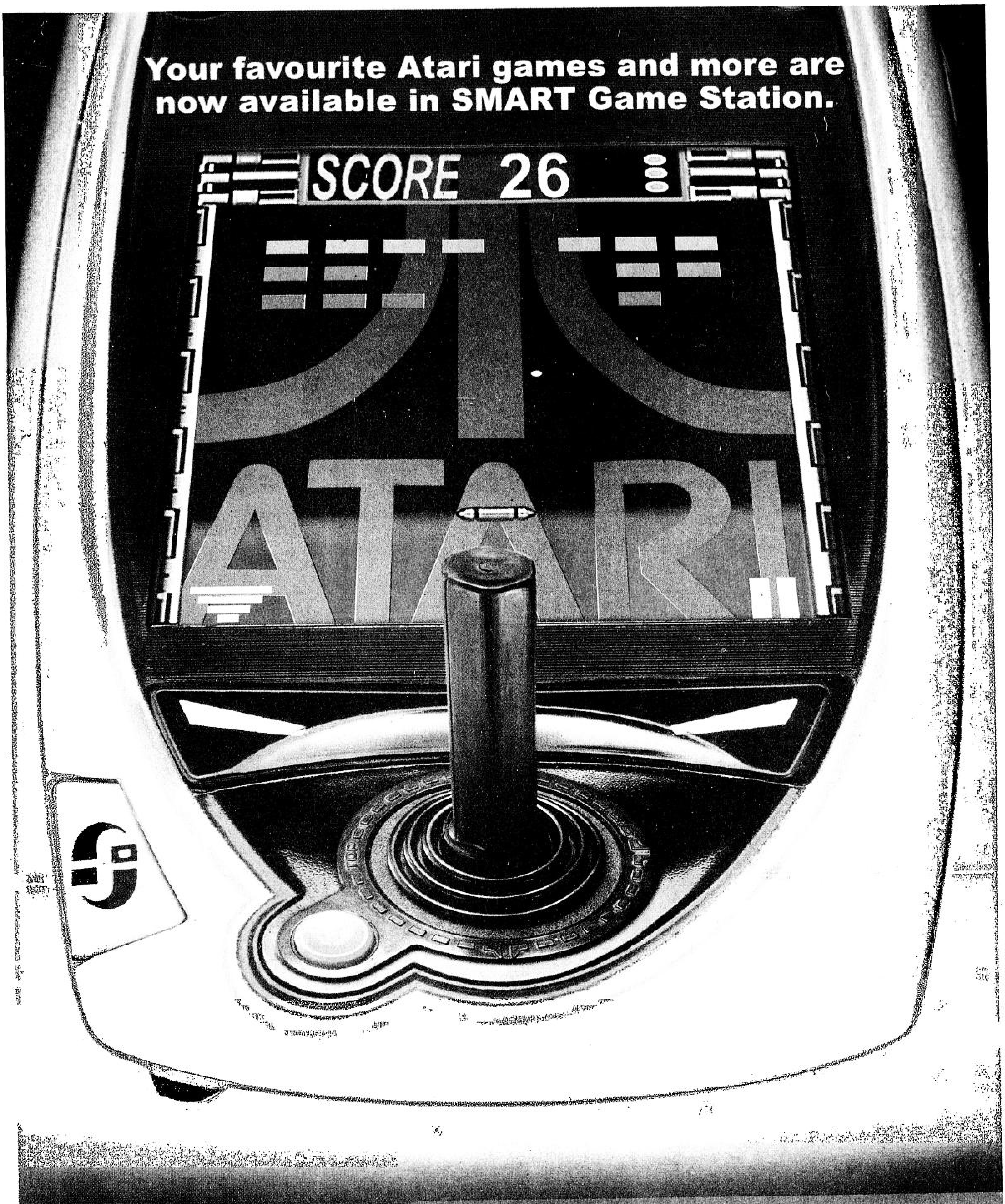
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ENTERTAINMENT

INQUIRER WAS THERE

Golden Globe warms up to 'Cold Mountain'

By Ruben V. Nepales
LA Correspondent

BEVERLY HILLS—Hollywood's awards season is in full swing.

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association kicked the season into higher gear when it announced Thursday its nominations for the 61st Annual Golden Globe Awards.

Leading the pack of nominees is "Cold Mountain," Oscar-winning director Anthony Minghella's epic period romance based on Charles Frazier's award-winning novel. The Civil War drama led with eight nominations, including performance nods for its stars, Nicole Kidman, Jude Law and Renee Zellweger.

"Lost in Translation," director Sofia Coppola's highly praised tale of a surprising friendship of two Americans in Japan (played by Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson), earned five nominations. The melancholy tale earlier won the best picture nod from the San Francisco Film Critics Circle.

Sofia Coppola was awarded best director by the Boston Society of Film Critics and New York Film Critics Circle. Her father Francis Coppola has not yet won such nod from the latter critics group.

Also claiming five nominations was "Mystic River," the Clint Eastwood-directed drama of murder and friendship which got an early boost when it was named by The National Board of Review and the Boston Society of Film Critics as best picture of the year.

Two actors from that film's fine acting ensemble were singled out: Sean Penn, chosen best actor by the National Board for his roles as a distraught father in this movie and as a heart patient in "21 Grams," and Tim Robbins, who portrayed a grown-up sexual abuse victim.

"The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King," the final installment of the acclaimed blockbuster trilogy, claimed four nominations. The New York film critics named Peter Jackson's hobbit saga as its best picture for 2003.

"Big Fish," Tim Burton's fable about a father and son and the tall tales that come between them, also won four citations.

Following closely behind with three nominations each were two 19th century epics, Peter Weir's excellent "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World" and "The Last Samurai."

GOLDEN/ C2-2

'Crying Ladies' gets 'A,' 100-percent tax rebate /C2-3

PAPAL APPROVAL. A bloody scene from "The Passion of the Christ"

Gibson film shows how Christ really died, says pope

VATICAN CITY—Pope John Paul II has seen "The Passion of the Christ," Mel Gibson's Biblical epic on the crucifixion of Christ, during two recent Vatican screenings, a church official said Thursday.

The official said the film's co-producer had told him after the screenings that the pope's secretary had quoted John Paul as saying: "It shows how it was."

The pope's apparent approval of "The Passion of the Christ" follows similar praise from several top Vatican officials, who have rejected complaints by some Jewish leaders who say the film suggests Jews were responsible for Christ's death.

The church official, who spoke on condition he not be identified, said two screenings were recently held so the ailing, 83-year-old pontiff didn't have to sit through one long production.

Papal spokesperson Joaquin Navarro-Valls declined Thursday to confirm or deny whether the pope had seen the film or what his impressions were.

Gibson's production company has arranged a number of private, pre-release screenings for Vatican officials.

However, plans for a screening at a Vatican-sponsored film festival on spirituality in movies earlier this month were scrapped because Gibson's Icon Productions company said the final edit wasn't ready yet.

Gibson plans to open the film in the United States on Feb. 25—Ash Wednesday on the Roman Catholic calendar. *AP*

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Golden Globe warms up to Cold …

A SCENE from 'Cold Mountain'

From page C2-1

Both these films' leads, Russell Crowe and Tom Cruise, garnered best actor (drama) nominations.

"Seabiscuit," the beautifully rendered story of three men (fine actors Tobey Maguire, Jeff Bridges and Chris Cooper) and a down-and-out racehorse that uplifted an entire nation, joins these best picture (drama) contenders: "Cold Mountain," "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King," "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World" and "Mystic River."

More clout

Lorenzo Soria, president of the association of international journalists that hands out these awards, was joined by Uma Thurman, Alicia Silverstone, Kelsey Grammer and Dick Clark in announcing the nominations for the Golden Globes at the Grand Ballroom of the Beverly Hilton.

Established in the early 1940s, the Globes, which honor the best achievements in film and television, have gained prestige and importance over the years.

This year, the Golden Globe nominations may have more clout on the Oscar derby than the winners do since the Academy Awards will be held a month earlier.

The Oscar nominations announcement is scheduled on Jan. 27, two days after the Globes are presented.

The rescheduling of the Oscar Awards, aimed at shortening the voting campaign which the Academy thinks is getting out of hand, prompted other award-giving bodies to change their awards show dates. Only the Golden Globe Awards kept its traditional January date.

Things improve

Asked how the earlier Academy Awards date will affect the Globes' influence on Oscar voters, Soria told INQUIRER Entertainment, "Time will tell. But we don't think so. We decided to stay on course and not to be affected by the other organizations."

Asked about the quality of this year's crop of films, Soria said, "At the start of each year it does not look like we're going to have a lot of good films but later in the year, things improve. We had quite an interesting batch this year."

In addition to staging its Globes every year, an always fun, glittering event, the association of 90 active journalists donates to film schools and non-profit film organizations.

Thurman had the pleasure of hearing her name announced onstage as one of the best actress (drama) nominees. She smiled as she heard her name mentioned by Silverstone.

Kidman, Johansson (who also got a best supporting actress nomination and was the Boston critics' choice for best actress), Charlize Theron (best actress pick of the San Francisco critics), Cate Blanchett and Evan Rachel Wood are Thurman's fellow nominees.

Ben Kingsley faces Crowe, Cruise, Penn and Law in the best actor (drama) category.

Musical/comedy

Bill Murray, named best actor by the New York, Boston and San Francisco film critics for "Lost in Translation," leads the best actor (musical or comedy) nominees: Jack Nicholson, Johnny Depp, Billy Bob Thornton and Jack Black.

Oscar winner Diane Keaton, the National Board's best actress for the romantic-comedy "Something's Gotta Give," competes for best actress (musical or comedy) against Johansson, Jamie Lee Curtis, Diane Lane and Helen Mirren.

"Something's Gotta Give," in which Keaton finds herself in a love triangle with Nicholson and Keanu Reeves, vies for best picture (musical or comedy) against "Finding Nemo," Disney's acclaimed animation moneymaker of the year, "Big Fish," "Lost in Translation," "Bend It Like Beckham" and "Love Actually."

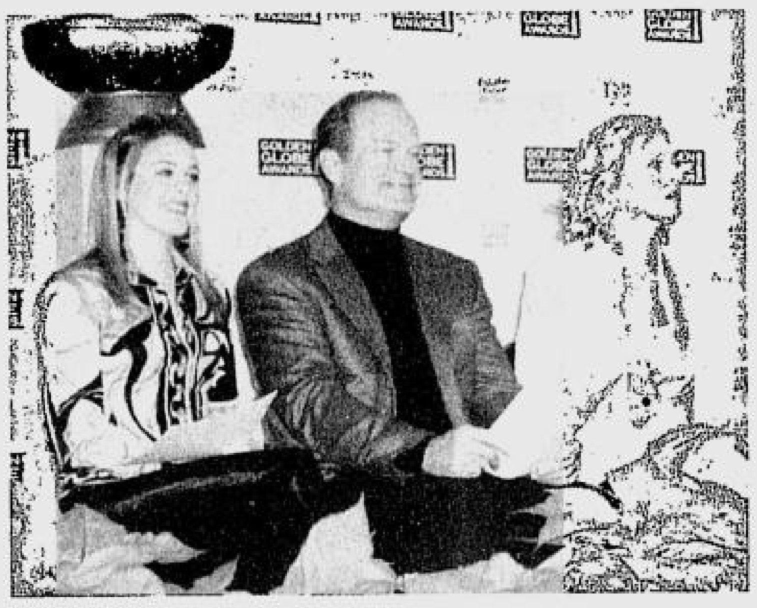
In the TV categories, HBO's adaptation of the landmark play "Angels in America," dominated the field with seven nominations. Meryl Streep and Al Pacino, who acted together for the first time in this miniseries, won acting nominations.

Silverstone, like Thurman, beamed when it was announced that she was up for best actress in a TV series (musical or comedy) honors against Sarah Jessica Parker, Bonnie Hunt, Reba McEntire, Debra Messing and Bitty Schram.

The 61st Annual Golden Globe Awards will take place on Sunday, Jan. 25, 2004.

The following is the complete list of the nominees:

Best Motion Picture—Drama: "Cold Mountain," Mirage Enterprises/Bona Fide Prods.; Miramax Films; "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King," Wingnut Films; New Line Cinema; "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World," Twentieth Century Fox/Universal Pictures/Miramax Films; "Mystic River," Warner Bros. Pictures; Warner Bros. Pictures/Village Roadshow Pictures; and "Seabiscuit," Larger Than Life/Kennedy-Marshall Prods.; Universal Pictures/DreamWorks Pictures/Spyglass Entertainment.



GOLDEN GLOBES president Soria (right) joins (from left) Silverstone, Grammer and Thurman in announcing the nominees. PHOTOS BY JANET RODRIGUEZ NEPALES

Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture—Drama: Cate Blanchett, "Veronica Guerin"; Nicole Kidman, "Cold Mountain"; Scarlett Johansson, "Girl With a Pearl Earring"; Charlize Theron, "Monster"; Uma Thurman, "Kill Bill"; Evan Rachel Woord, "Thirteen."

Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture—Drama: Russel Crowe, "Master and Commander"; Tom Cruise, "The Last Samurai"; Ben Kingsley, "House of Sand and Fog"; Jude Law, "Cold Mountain"; Sean Penn, "Mystic River."

Best Motion Picture—Musical or Comedy: "Bend It Like Beckham," Kintop Pictures; Fox Searchlight Pictures; "Big Fish," Columbia Pictures; Sony Pictures Releasing; "Finding Nemo," Walt Disney Pictures/Pixar Animation Studios; Buena Vista Pictures Distribution; "Lost in Translation," American Zoetrope/Elemental Films; Focus Features; "Love Actually," Working Title/DNA Films; Universal Pictures/Studiocanal.

Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture—Musical or Comedy: Jamie Lee Curtis, "Freaky Friday"; Scarlett Johansson, "Lost in Translation"; Diane Keaton, "Something's Gotta Give"; Diane Lane, "Under the Tuscan Sun"; Helen Mirren, "Calendar Girls."

Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture—Musical or Comedy: Jack Black, "School of Rock"; Johnny Depp, "Pirates of the Carribean: The Curse of the Black Pearl"; Bill Murray, "Lost in Translation"; Jack Nicholson, "Something's Gotta Give"; Billy Bob Thornton, "Bad Santa."

Best Foreign Language Film:

"The Barbarian Invasions," French Canada; "Goodbey, Lenin," Germany; "Monseur Ibrahim," France; "Osama," Afghanistan; "The Return," Russia.

Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture: Maria Bello, "The Cooler"; Patricia Clarkson, "Pieces of April"; Hope Davis, "American Splendor"; Holly Hunter, "Thirteen"; Rene Zelwegger, "Cold Mountain."

Best Performance by an Actor in a Suppporting Role in a Motion Picture: Alec Baldwin, "The Cooler"; William H. Macy, "Seabiscuit"; Tim Robbins, "Mystic River"; Peter Sarsgaard, "Shattered Glass"; Ken Watanabe, "The Last Samurai."

Best Director, Motion Picture: Sofia Coppola, "Lost in Translation"; Clint Eastwood, "Mystic River"; Peter Jackson, "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King"; Anthony Minghella, "Cold Mountain"; Peter Weir, "Master and Commander."

Best Screenplay, Motion Picture: Sofia Coppola, "Lost in Translation"; Richard Curtis, "Love Actually"; Brian Helgeland, "Mystic River"; Anthony Minghella, "Cold Mountain"; Jim Sherican, Naomi Sheridan and Kirsten Sheridan, "In America."

Best Original Score, Motion Picture: Alexandre Desplat, "Girl With a Pearl Earring;" Danny Elfman, "Big Fish"; Howard Shore "The Lord Of The Rings:The Return of the King"; Gabriel Yared "Cold Mountain;" and Hans Zimmer "The Last Samurai."

Best Original Song, Motion Picture: "The Heart of Every Girl" ("Mona Lisa Smile") by Elton John and Bernie Taupin; "Into the West" ("The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King") by Howard Shore, Fran Walsh, Annie Lennox; "Man of the Hour" ("Big Fish") by Eddie Vedder; "Time Enough for Tears" ("In America") by Bono, Gavin Friday and Maurice Seezer; and "You Will be My Ain True Love" ("Cold Mountain") by Sting.

Best Television Series, Drama: "24" (Fox); "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (CBS); "Nip/Tuck (FX); "Six Feet Under (HBO); "The West Wing (NBC).

Best Performance by an Actress in a television series, Drama: Frances Conroy ("Six Feet Under"); "Jennifer Garner ("Alias"); Allison Janney ("The West Wing"); Joely Richardson ("Nip/Tuck); Amber Tamblyn ("Joan of Arcadia").

Best Performance by an Actor in a television Series, Drama: Michael Chiklis ("The Shield"); Anthony Lapaglia ("Without A Trace"); William Petersen ("CSI: Crime Scene Investigation") Martin Sheena ("The West Wing"); Kiefer Sutherland ("24").

Best Television Series, Musical or Comedy: "Arrested Development" (Fox), 20th Century Fox TV i.a.w. Imagine TV; "Monk" (USA), Mandeville Films, Inc. i.a.w. Touchstone TV; "The Office (BBC America), BBC/BBC America; "Sex and the City (HBO), HBO; "Will and Grace" (NBC), KoMut Entertainment i.a.w. Three Sister and NBC Studios.

Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series, Musical or Comedy: Bonnie Hunt ("Life With Bonnie"), Reba McEntire ("Reba") Debra Messing ("Will and Grace"), Sarah Jessica Parker ("Sex and the City"), Bitty Schram ("Monk"), Alicia Silverstone ("Miss Match").

Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series, Musical or Comedy: Ricky Gervais ("The Office"), Matt LeBlanc ("Friends"), Bernie Mac ("The Bernie Mac Show"), Eric McCormack ("Will and Grace"), Tony Shalhoub ("Monk").

Best Mini-Series or Motion Picture Made for Television: "Angels in America" (HBO), HBO; "My House in Umbria" (HBO), HBO; "Normal" (HBO), HBO; "Soldier's Girl" (Showtime), Bachrach/Gottlieb Prod.; "Tennessee Williams' "The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone" (Showtime), Showtime.

Best Performance by an Actress in a Mini-series or a Motion Picture Made for Television: Judy Davis ("The Reagans"); Jessica Lange ("Normal"); Helen Mirren ("Tennessee Williams' The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone"); Maggie Smith ("My House in Umbria") Meryl Streep ("Angels in America").

Best Performance by an Actor in a Mini-series or a Motion Picture Made for Television: Antonio Banderas and starring Pancho Villa as himself; James Brolin ("The Reagans"); Troy Garity ("Soldier's Girl"); Al Pacino ("Angels in America"); Tom Wilkinson ("Normal").

Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Series, Mini-series or Motion Picture Made for Television: Kim Cattrall ("Sex and the City"); Kristin Davis ("Sex and the City"); Megan Mullally ("Will & Grace"); Cynthia Nixon ("Sex and the City"); Mary Louise Parker ("Angels in America").

Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Series, Mini-series or Motion Picture Made for Television: Sean Hayes ("Will & Grace"); Lee Pace ("Soldier's Girl"); Ben Shenkman ("Angels in America") Patrick Wilson ("Angels in America"); Jeffrey Wright ("Angels in America").

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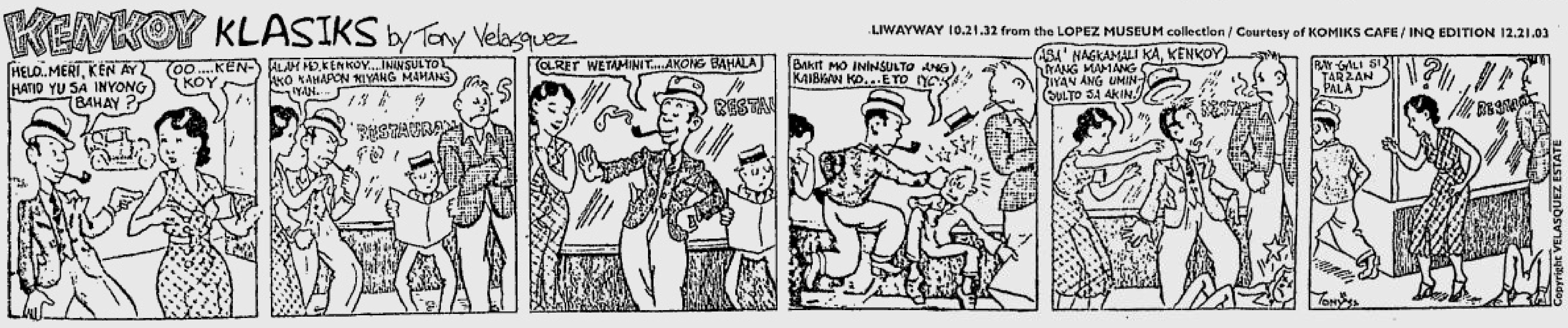
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'Crying Ladies' gets 'A' rating

MOURNERS FOR PAY of "Crying Ladies" (from left) Angel Aquino, Sharon Cuneta and Hilda Koronel

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE CINEMA Evaluation Board last Thursday granted an A rating to "Crying Ladies," which stars Megastar Sharon Cuneta in her first participation in the Metro Manila Film Festival.

The A rating means the movie is entitled to a 100-percent tax rebate.

"Crying Ladies," produced by Unitel Pictures, is second only to Star Cinema's "Tanging Yaman," released in 2000, to be given the highest rating by the CEB.

CEB board member Butch Francisco told Inquirer Entertainment last Friday, "'Crying Ladies' is an intelligent film. It is not your typical Filipino movie. It's unpredictable and well-directed.

"My only hope is for people to watch it. The money it could get from the rebate could be bankrolled into another movie of the same quality."

Francisco, however, said the tax rebate would take effect after Jan. 3, the last day of the 10-day Metro Manila Film Festival.

Tony Gloria, who is also the producer of the critically acclaimed "American Adobo," produced the film. It is based on the Palanca award-winning screenplay by veteran commercial director Mark Meily, who made his first film feature in "Crying Ladies."

Sharon said she is very grateful for the A rating.

"I'm also very proud of Unitel, *Direk* Mark, my costars and the whole family," she told Inquirer Entertainment. "We're all inspired anew."

According to Francisco, this is the first time that a director's first movie gets an A rating. Only veteran directors, like Ishmael Bernal ("Hinugot sa Langit"), Mike de Leon ("Sister Stella L") and Laurice Guillen ("Tanging Yaman"), got the same rating before, he pointed out.

"*Marami ngang director diyan, hindi man lamang maka-*B rating," Francisco said. "This movie is something we can all be proud of. If this makes money at the box office, it means there's still hope for this industry to produce good films."

"Crying Ladies" is about three professional mourners in Chinatown, paid to cry at Chinese funerals and burials. It also features Hilda Koronel, Angel Aquino, Eric Quizon and child actor Julio Pacheco.

The CEB, formerly known as the Film Ratings Board, evaluates local films and rewards the best productions with amusement-tax rebates to encourage producers to make better, more significant films.

Veteran theater actress and director Zenaida Amador is the CEB chair.

"I hope the film succeeds both critically and commercially so that its success will encourage others to produce spiritually enriching movies next year," Francisco said.

RETROSPECT makes a wish.

REtroSPECT has new music video

REtroSPECT, the retro pop band, has a new music video, "Hiling," from the album "The Luv Bug REtroSPECT."

Composed by Chuckie Dreyfus and acoustically arranged by REtroSPECT, the solo is done by Goldie, with the back-up voices of Ogie, Em-j and J. Martin. The song is about wishing upon a star for love, happiness and contentment.

Says Ogie: "We first planned to do the music video in China right after our very first concert in Hong Kong."

"It was exhausting because of the long train ride, but we had fun shooting it," adds Em-j.

"Christmas is the best time of the year for looking back and for making 'hiling' (requests)," says J. Martin, "so we thought of making the music video with the Yuletide season as its thematic background. I think the result of our hard work is quite fulfilling."

"Hiling" is the directorial debut of J. Martin.

"Hiling" is showing on Myx.

REtroSPECT is inviting music lovers to its performances on Dec. 20 and Dec. 27 at Merk's in Greenbelt 3, on Dec. 24, at Le Boulevardier of Hotel InterCon, on Dec. 29 with Passage and True Faith at the SBMA Football Field, on Dec. 31 at the Palms Country Club in Alabang, on Jan. 1 at the Amazing World Lights and Lanterns at the CCP Complex, and on Jan. 3 at the Dagupan Astrodome in Dagupan City. Backing the REtroSPECT are "The Gang": Glen Dequina on lead guitar, Benjie Ariola on drums, Rey Reyes on bass guitar, Joey M. on alto and soprano saxophone, and Noel Cruz on keyboards.

"The Luv Bug REtroSPECT" is available in CDs and cassettes from Harmony Music of Alpha Records. Visit www.retrospect.ph.

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ERIC QUIZON RICKY DAVAO
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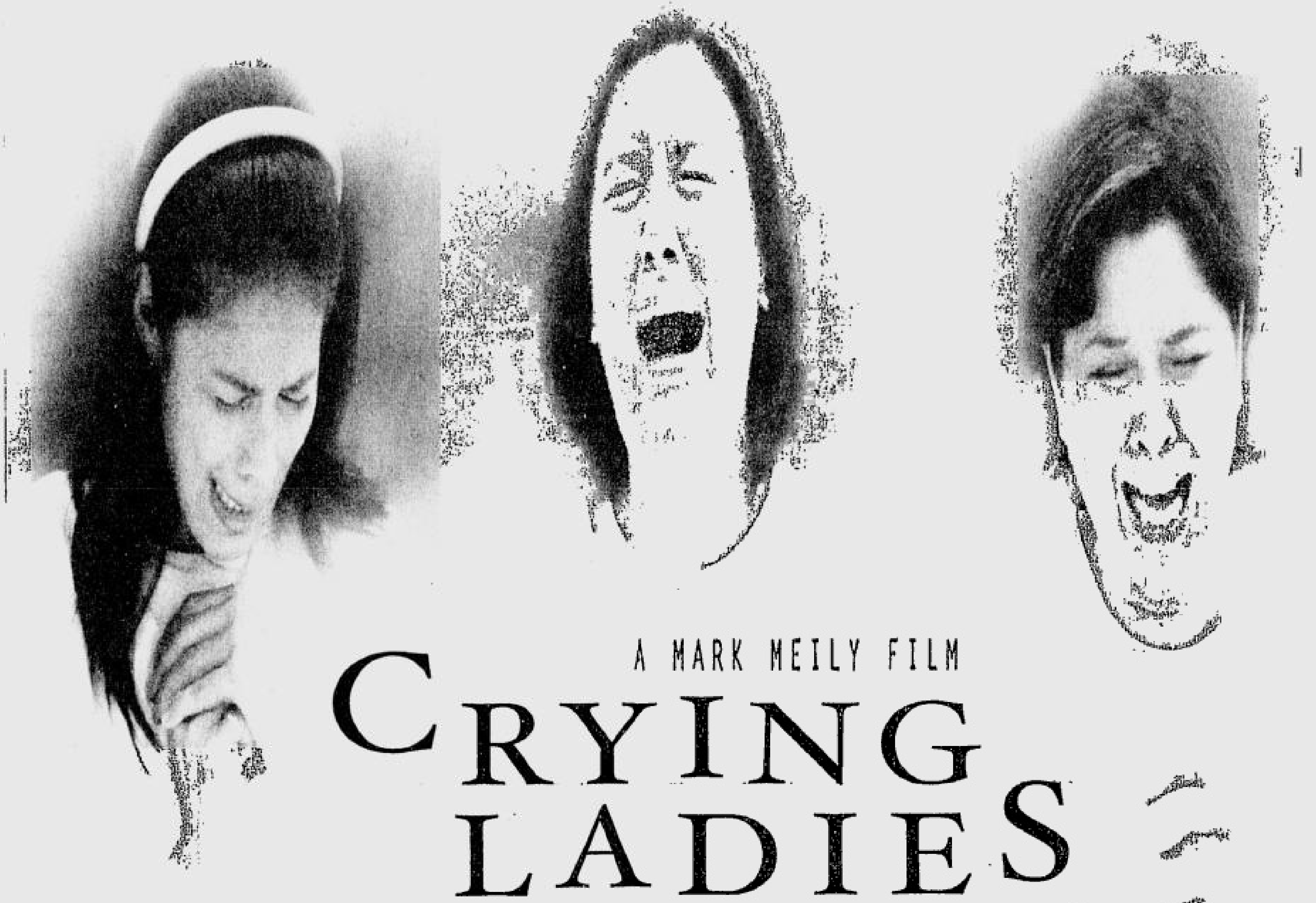

A MARK MEILY FILM
CRYING LADIES
a heartwarming comedy

RATED A BY THE CINEMA EVALUATION BOARD (CEB)

A Tony Gloria Production in Association with Basfilm Productions
line producer NOEMI PEJI co-executive producer BOBBY SUAREZ sound by RAFFY MAGSAYSAY music by VINCENT DE JESUS edited by DANNY AÑONUEVO production design by REJI REGALADO director of photography LEE MEILY executive producers JUN REYES & VINCENT NEBRIDA produced by TONY GLORIA written and directed by MARK MEILY

www.cryingladies.com

29th Philippines
DOLBY DIGITAL IN SELECTED THEATRES
unitel PICTURES

OPENS DECEMBER 25

Pinoy carols on flute and guitar

A NEW instrumental recording of favorite Philippine Christmas music is now available in the new album "Paskong Pilipino," the first all-Filipino, all-instrumental Christmas album in the country.

It includes "Himig ng Hangin" (Jandi Arboleda), "Paglamig ng Hangin" (Manoling Francisco, SJ); "Gumising" (Manoling Francisco, SJ/ Onofre Pagsanjan), "Simbanggabi" (Lucio San Pedro), "Kampana ng Simbahan" (S.Y. Ramos/ Juan Silos), "Payapang Daigdig" (Felipe de Leon/Levi Celerio), "Pasko na Naman" (Felipe de Leon/Levi Celerio), "Ang Pasko ay Sumapit" (V. Rubi/Levi Celerio), "Kumukutikutitap" (Ryan Cayabyab), and "Pasko na Sinta Ko" (Francis Dandan/A. Estanislao).

Flutist Ray Sison and guitarist Lionel Valdellon are also featured in the album.

The album cover was done with the help of Patis Tesoro's Ninay dolls. There are also 12 translations on the cover and inside.

The album was released last week and is privately distributed for now. Only 2,000 copies were printed and 1,500 have been sold to private companies as corporate Christmas giveaways.

Limited extra copies are available. Those interested can order the album directly through sison@mozcom.com.

HANDA KA NA BANG MATAKOT ?
THE MOST HORRIFYING FILM OF 2003
MTRCB RATING ▶PG-13 Parental Guidance 13 - (Children below thirteen (13) years of age shall be allowed only if accompanied by a parent or an adult.)
This movie contains scary scenes that may not be suitable for very young viewers. parental guidance is proposed
MARVIN AGUSTIN DINGDONG DANTES
RICKY DAVAO WOWIE DE GUZMAN ANNA CAPRI NIKKI VALDEZ AND MS. BARBARA PEREZ
RICA PERALEJO
MALIKMATA
HANDA KA NA BANG MATAKOT?
STARRING SHINTARO VALDEZ EUGENE DOMINGO JACKIE CASTILLEJO MADELEINE NICOLAS
DIRECTED BY JOSE JAVIER REYES dgpi
OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2003
ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK FROM OCTOARTS - ORBIT MUSIC
CANARY FILMS PRESENTATION DOLBY IN SELECTED THEATRES Distributed by: OctoArts FILMS
OPENS DECEMBER 25

COLUMBIA PICTURES presents A WORLD-CLASS FILM.
HOMECOMING
ASTONISHING IN ITS SIMPLICITY YET AWE-INSPIRING IN ITS COMPLEXITY.
MARIO HERNANDO, MALAYA
MTRCB RATING PG-13
Children below 13 years old will only be allowed if accompanied by parent or adult
THE FILM MERITS AN ENTHUSIASTIC COMMENDATION. IT WILL MOST ASSUREDLY BE TALKED ABOUT AND DEBATED ABOUT.
CONRADO DE QUIROS, PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
WONDERFULLY STAGED ... AMONG THE BEST THIS YEAR.
BUTCH FRANCISCO, PHILIPPINE STAR
HER JOURNEY BEGINS WHEN SHE RETURNS...
ELIZABETH OROPESA AND ALESSANDRA DE ROSSI
A FILM BY GIL M. PORTES DGPI
An OFFICIAL ENTRY to the 2003 METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL
OPENS DECEMBER 25, 2003

ALL DIGITAL SOUND
AYALA CINEMAS
PRESENTS

G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 THE GRUDGE	1 MYSTIC RIVER	ArtFilm 1 BALZAC 12:20, 2:30, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 ELF 2:50, 5:00, 7:10, 9:20, 11:30	THX 1 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
2 LOST ISLAND	2 THE GRUDGE	2 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 INTOLERBALE CRUEL-TY 2:30, 4:45, 7:00, 9:15, 11:30	2 MYSTIC RIVER
3 CABIN FEVER	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	Onstage REGINE VELASQUEZ Dec. 19 & 20 · 9pm	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 LORD OF THE RINGS 2 12:45, 4:00, 7:15, 10:30	3 ELF
4 OUT OF TIME	4 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 SCARY MOVIE 3 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30	4 UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN
	5 MYSTIC RIVER		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 MYSTIC RIVER 3:00, 5:50, 8:40, 11:30	5 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
	6 SCARY MOVIE 3			
	7 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2			

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2 (SDDS) MASTER AND COMMANDER
3 (DTS) LOONEY TUNES
4 GOLD (DTS ES) OUT OF TIME
5 GOLD (DOLBY EX) JEEPERS CREEPERS-2
6 GOLD (SDDS) WRONG TURN
7 GOLD (DOLBY EX) INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
8 LOST ISLAND
9 ELF
10 THE GRUDGE-1

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2 RESERVE
3 (DTS) RESERVE
4 RESERVE
5 RESERVE
6 (DTS) RESERVE
Golden Pearl THX RESERVE

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2 JEANIE BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
3 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO

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2 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3 ALIPIN
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) LOST ISLAND
5 BIKTIMA

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(Alabang) tel 850.4285
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2 BIKTIMA
3 MR. SUAVE
4 TILL THER WAS YOU
5 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
6 LOST ISLAND

M star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel 873.5004
1 MR. SUAVE
2 LORD OF THE RING - 2

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MYSTIC RIVER

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 RUGRATS
2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL INC
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1
2
3

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2 HAPLOS
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

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4 RESERVE
5 BIKTIMA
6 LOST ISLAND
7 (DTS) JEANIE BAKIT NGAYON KALANG
8 (SDDS) HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
9 (DOLBY) AS BOOBS

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2 RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364-3781
1 BIKTIMA
2 MR. SUAVE
3 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
4 (SDDS) LOST ISLAND
5 ALIPIN
6 (DOLBY) CABIN FEVER
7 (DTS) HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
8 JEANIE BAKIT NGAYON KALANG
9 AS BOOBS

Gotesco Commonwealth
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2 (SDDS) HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3 (DTS) JEANIE BAKIT NGAYON KALANG
4 (DOLBY) INTERNET QUEEN
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2 JEANIE BAKIT NGAYON KALANG
3 (DTS) HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
4 BIKTIMA
5 (SDDS) INTORELABLE CRUELTY

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5 AS BOOBS

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2 MR. SUAVE

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2 ALIPIN
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) MASTER & COMMANDER
4 (SDDS) LORD OF THE RINGS 1
5 (DTS) JEEPER CREEPERS
6 DIE ANOTHER DAY
7 LOST ISLAND

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS
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2 RESERVE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna) TEL. (049) 837-0928
1 ALIPIN
2 AS BOOBS
3 (DTS) THE PHONE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 RUGRATS THE MOVIE
2 (DTS) WISHER
3 (DOLBY) CABIN FEVER
4 MR. BONES

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 THE PHONE
2 (DOLBY) RUGRATS THE MOVIE
3 (DTS) MSYTIC RIVER
4 CABIN FEVER

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 LOONEY TUNE
2 STAR RUNNER
3 (DOLBY) WRONG TURN
4

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729
1 MR. SUAVE
2 HOUSE OF 1000 CORPSES
3 (DOLBY) COLD CREEK MANOR
4 (DTS) OUT OF TIME

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305
1 (DOLBY)
2 (DTS)
3

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) BIKTIMA
2 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3 (DTS) JEANIE BAKIT NGAYON KALANG
4 AS BOOBS

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) MR. BONE
2 ALIPIN
3 (DTS) WISHER
4 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
5 AS BOOBS

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 STAR RUNNER
2 KATAS
3

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 RUGRAT GO WILD
2 MR. SUAVE
3 KATAS

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 COLD CREEK MANOR
2 AKO, IKAW, SIYA
3 (DTS) OUT OF TIME
4 STAR RUNNER

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808
1 (DTS) RESERVE
2 RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 BALAT SIBUYAS
2 MASTER & COMMANDER
3

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2 GOOD BOY
3 (DTS ES) MYSTIC RIVER
4 JEEPER CREEPERS

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'Salu-Salong Krismas' on GMA

GMA presents a TV special entitled "Salu-Salong Krismas" that airs tonight at 9:30 p.m. on GMA's Sunday Night Box Office.

"Eat Bulaga" shows its appreciation of the viewer's support through the years. The boys of "Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita" have prepared a comedy number dedicated to siblings. The gang of "All Together Now" has something fabulous for peers. "Nuts Entertainment" highlights the importance of laughter, as does "Bubble Gang."

Neighbors are brought together in "Idol Ko Si Kap" while parents and children are given attention in "Daddy Di Do Du." "Twin Hearts" and "Love to Love" share the magical feeling of falling in love. And "Click" surprises teen friends with an elaborate production number.

"Narito ang Puso Ko," "Kakabakaba," "Adventures, K! the P1,000,000 Videoke Challenge," "Celebrity Turns," "Master Showman Presents" and "SOP" have their own special production numbers.

The hosts of "Startalk," "S-Files," "All About You," "Partners Mel & Jay," "Sis" and "Magpakailanman" lead every step of the way as the viewers watch this fascinating celebration of Christmas with the Kapuso Network.

SHOW TIME

'Once Upon a Christmas'

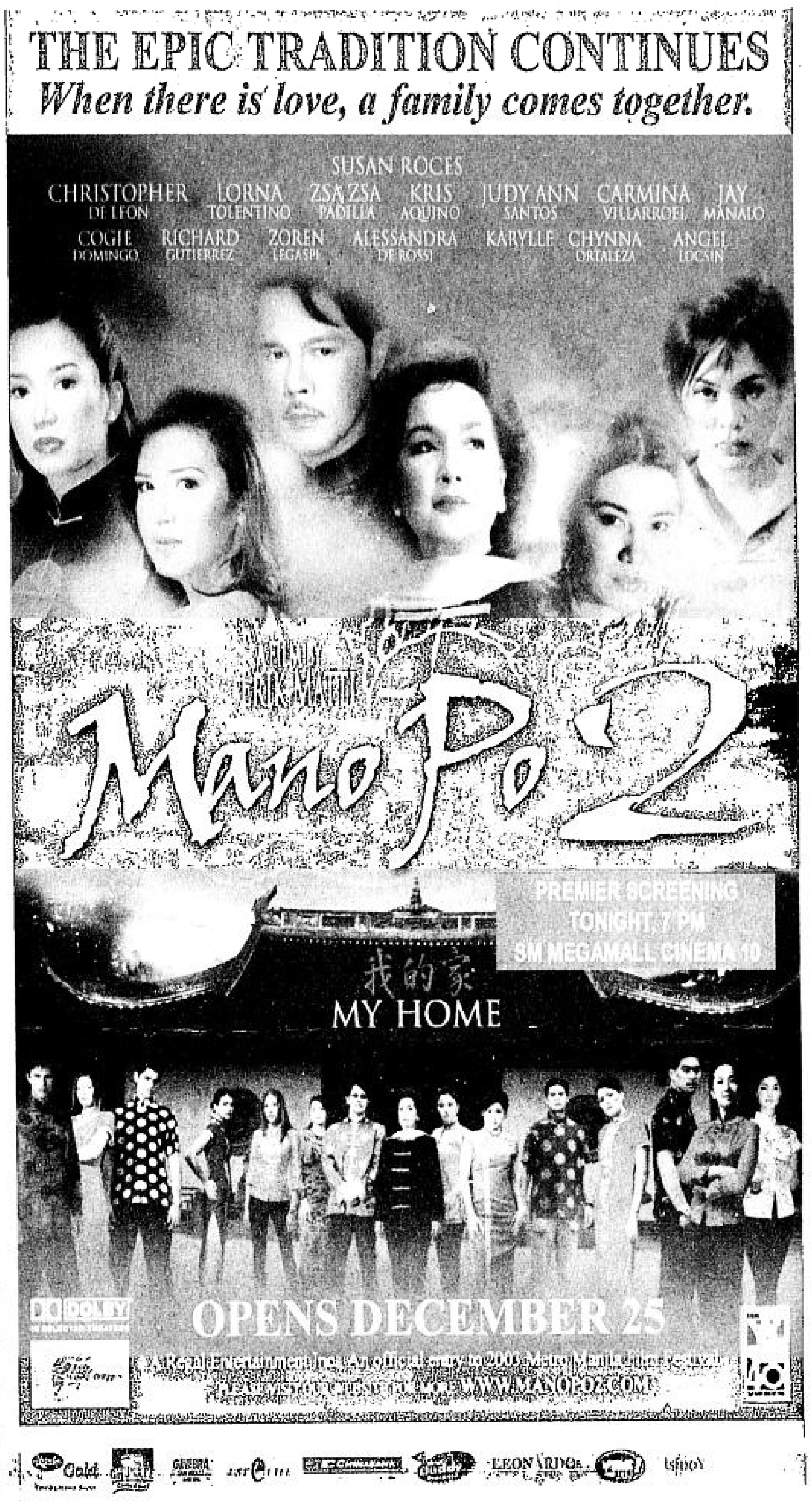
ABS-CBN invites viewers to a heart-warming, thought-provoking Christmas tonight at 9:30 p.m. when it airs "Once Upon a Christmas," an all-star benefit concert for the children of Bantay Bata 163.

Originally presented before a live audience at the Meralco Theater, "Once Upon a Christmas" featured the acclaimed children's choir from Loboc, Bicol, recent winners of the Europe and Its Songs 6th International Folksong Choir festival held this year in Barcelona, Spain; children from the Ayala Foundation's Center of Excellence in Public Education (Centex), and child actors from the theater group Trumpets.

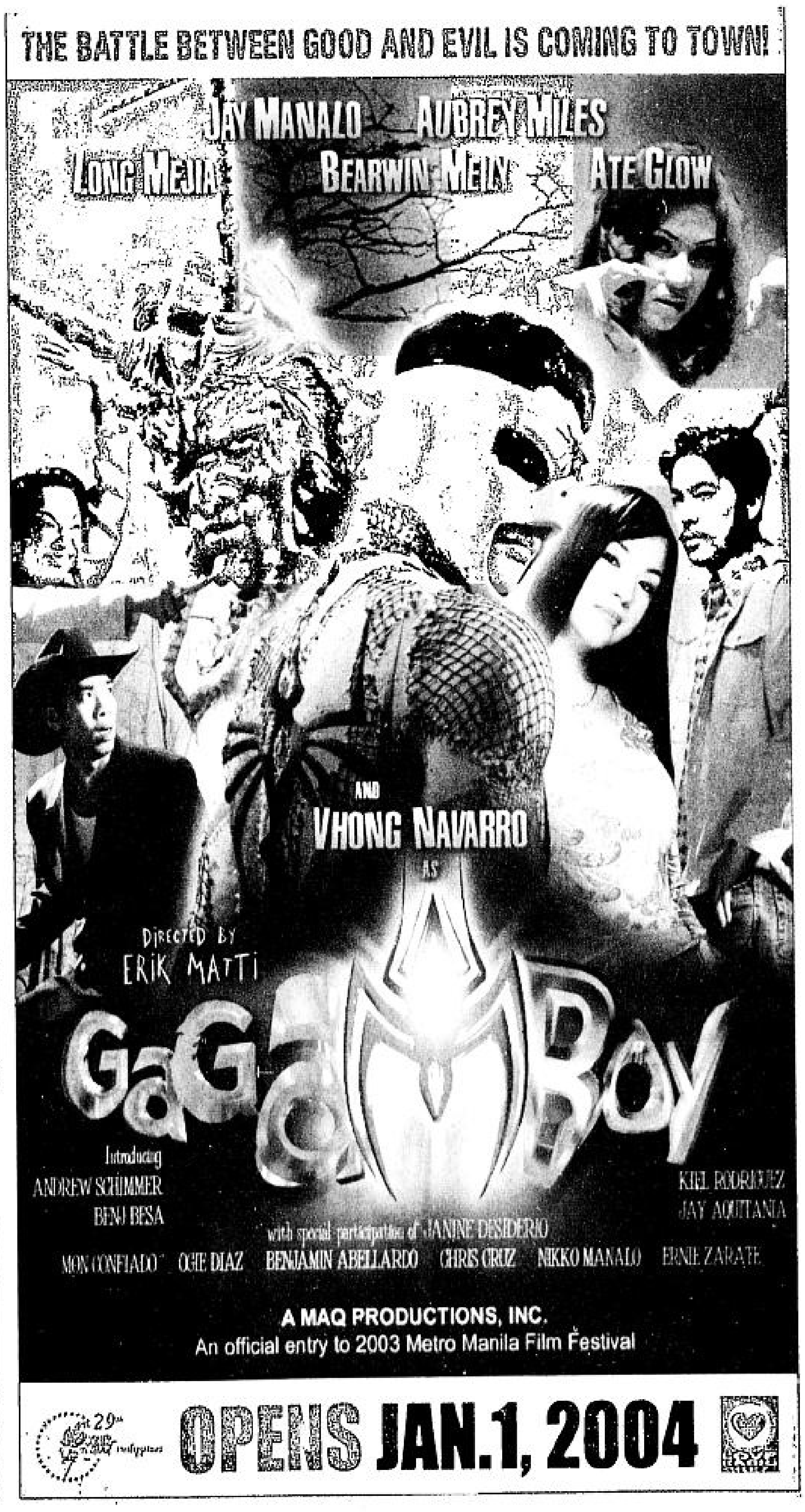
Hosts are Korina Sanchez, Aga Muhlach, Heart Evangelista, Jodie Santamaria and Drew Arellano.

Also performing are singers and actors led by Regine Velasquez, Gary Valenciano and daughter Kiana, and many others as well as the 40-member Manila Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Gerard Salonga. Audie Gemora is stage director.

MTRCB G General Patronage ALL AGES ADMITTED
THE BIGGEST FANTASY • COMEDY MOVIE OF THE YEAR
ANG PABORITONG SUPERHERO NG BAYAN
ZOREN LEGASPI LEO MARTINEZ DANICA SOTTO
INTRODUCING ALICIA MAYER
GUEST STARS JOEY DE LEON REZ CORTEZ ALLAN K. JIMMY SANTOS SEX BOMB
VIC SOTTO
FANTASTIC MAN
ALSO STARRING ROMY DIAZ • DICK ISRAEL NANETTE INVENTOR MARISSA SANCHEZ • MIKO SOTTO PJ MALONZO • VALERIE CONCEPCIO
ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK FROM OCTOARTS-ORBIT MUSIC
DIRECTED BY TONY Y. REYES, DGPI
OctoArts Films
DOLBY IN SELECTED THEATRES
OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2003
OPENS DECEMBER 25


THE EPIC TRADITION CONTINUES
When there is love, a family comes together.
SUSAN ROCES
CHRISTOPHER DE LEON LORNA TOLENTINO ZSAZSA PADILLA KRIS AQUINO JUDY ANN SANTOS CARMINA VILLARROEL JAY MANALO
COGIE DOMINGO RICHARD GUTIERREZ ZOREN LEGASPI ALESSANDRA DE ROSSI KARYLLE CHYNNA ORTALEZA ANGEL LOCSIN
Mano Po 2
PREMIER SCREENING TONIGHT, 7 PM SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 10
我的家 MY HOME
OPENS DECEMBER 25

MTRCB G General Patronage ALL AGES ADMITTED
ARA MINA as DIABOLIKA
MICHAEL V. as Prof. JAMES
VIC SOTTO
FANTASTIC MAN
DIRECTED BY TONY Y. REYES, DGPI
OctoArts Films
DOLBY IN SELECTED THEATRES
OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2003
OPENS DECEMBER 25


THE BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL IS COMING TO TOWN!
JAY MANALO AUBREY MILES
LONG MEJIA BEARWIN MEILY ATE GLOW
AND VHONG NAVARRO AS
Directed by ERIK MATTI
GaGaMBoy
Introducing ANDREW SCHIMMER BENJ BESA
KIEL RODRIGUEZ JAY AQUITANIA
with special participation of JANINE DESIDERIO
MON CONFIADO OGIE DIAZ BENJAMIN ABELLARDO CHRIS CRUZ NIKKO MANALO ERNIE ZARATE
A MAQ PRODUCTIONS, INC.
An official entry to 2003 Metro Manila Film Festival
29th
OPENS JAN.1, 2004

Rod Stewart, Cher together

From page C2-7

Vaughn all the way to Sinead O' Connor.

However, the 2003 version of Rod and Cher stands out as it features almost never-heard original sexy lyrics. The merging of Rod's husky tenor and Cher's earthy alto also mirrors a rare symbiotic disparity further shaded by the presentation of the song from each gender's point of view.

"Bewitched" is just one of 14 tracks in Stewart's latest album. Other must-hear remakes in "The Great American Songbook: Volume II" are "I'm in the Mood for Love," "Smile," "As Time Goes By," "I Only Have Eyes for You," "Someone to Watch Over me" and "Til There Was You."

Last year was the rock superstar's first venture into the world of pop standards via "It Had to be You... The Great American Songbook." The bid was well-received despite Rod's firmly entrenched image and status.

"It Had to be You" promptly debuted in the Top Five of Billboard's Top 200 charts upon release and moved four million copies worldwide. It also earned for Rod a Grammy nomination.

Track record shows that Rod has a knack for reinvention. The treasure trove of his hits ("Do You Think I'm Sexy," "Some Guys Have All the Luck," Tonight's the Night," "Maggie May," etc.) accumulated through four decades (from the '70s) stand testimony to this fact.

"The Great American Songbook: Volume II" is released locally by BMG Records (Pilipinas) Inc.

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CINEMA 1	**MYSTIC RIVER** 12:10, 3:00, 5:50, 8:40 **R13**	
CINEMA 2	**LOST ISLAND** 11:25, 1:45, 4:05, 6:25, 8:50 **R18**	

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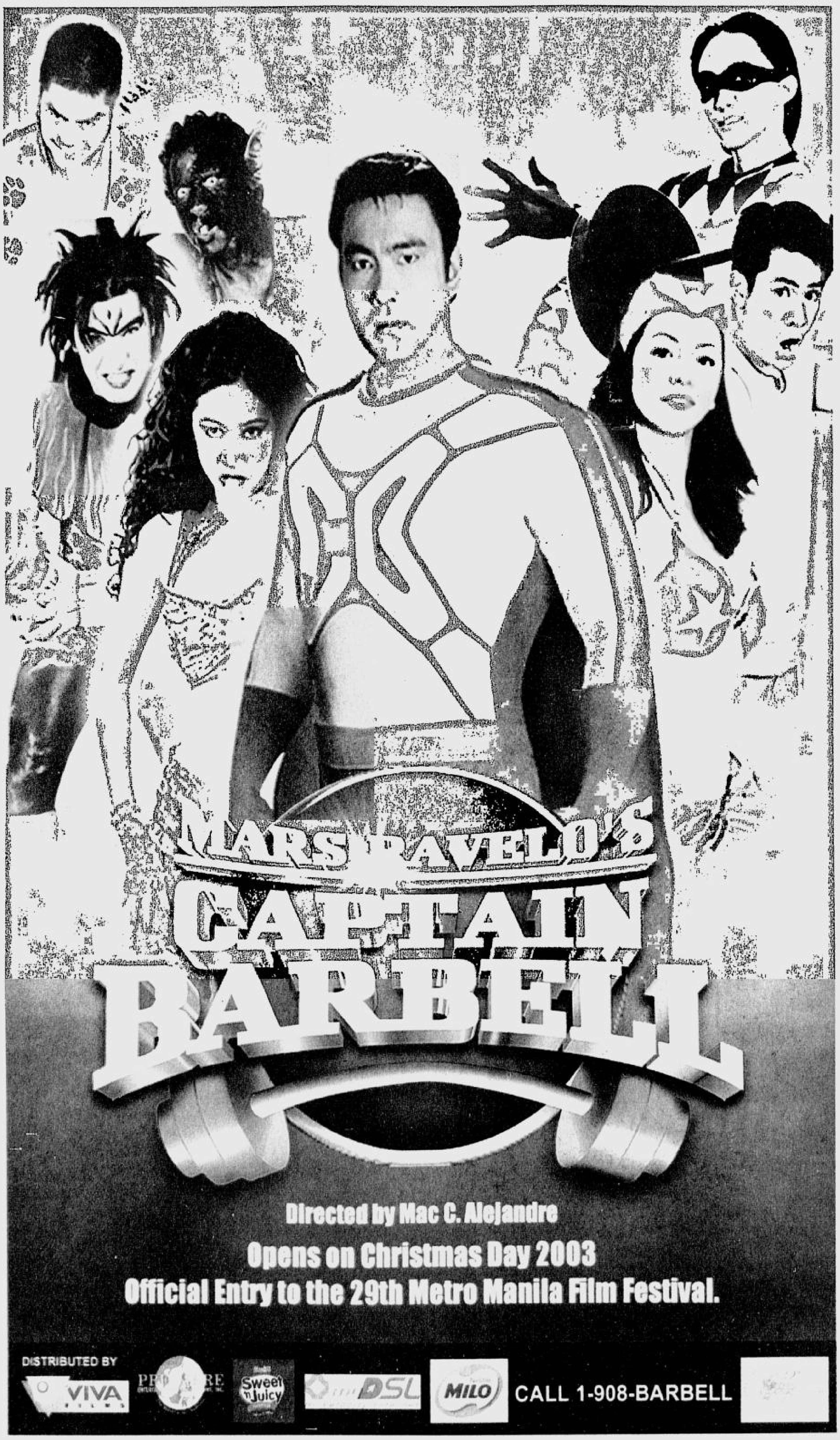
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA • 7224496

MUSIC MUSEUM
JAN 9.2004 'KYLA RECALL' 8:30 PM
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL: 721-6726 OR 721-0635



Directed by Mac C. Alejandre
Opens on Christmas Day 2003
Official Entry to the 29th Metro Manila Film Festival.

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Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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Ali 5	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
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DEC 23	DISNEY ON ICE-GRAND OPENING 8PM
DEC 25	DISNEY ON ICE - 4:30PM / 8:00PM
DEC 26	DISNEY ON ICE - 4:30PM / 8:00PM
DEC 27	DISNEY ON ICE - 1PM / 4:30PM / 8PM
DEC 28	DISNEY ON ICE - 1PM / 4:30PM / 8PM
DEC 29	DISNEY ON ICE - 4:30PM / 8 PM

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

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ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	ALIPIN
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	LIBERATED
B	AKO, IKAW, SIYA
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BIKTIMA
CINEMA-2	ALIPIN
CINEMA-3	WAG KANG KIKIBO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MR. SUAVE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	LORD OF THE RINGS 1
CINEMA-6	CHAVIT
CINEMA-7	BABAE SA BREAKWATER
CINEMA-8	ASBOOBS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LOST ISLAND
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORDS OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	STAR RUNNER
CINEMA-12	CABIN FEVER
CINEMA-14	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
CINEMA-15	ELF

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PIÑAS)	OUT OF TIME
CINEMA-1	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
CINEMA-2	FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
CINEMA-4	COLD CREEK MANOR

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

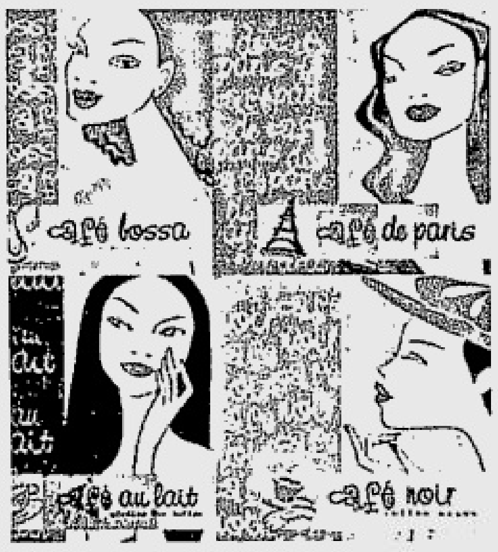
(PAHANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

Heart keeps time

EVANGELISTA

RIDING high on the success of her recent movie, "My First Romance" and an Awit Award recognition, singer, Myx VJ and ABS-CBN Talent Center jewel Heart Evangelista has signed up to be the official endorser to L Timestudio, the newest watch chain in town.

A unique concept store from The Lucerne Group, L Timestudio represents hip, hot, and trendy watches. Anchored by industry giants Fossil and Nike, L Timestudio also carries Kenneth Cole, DKNY, Diesel, Lacoste, Reaction, Philippe Starck, Alessi, Buler and Freestyle watches. In the coming months, the familiar face of Heart Evangelista will embody the face of time in all L Time-studio shops and corners. The L Timestudio flagship store is at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall, with outlets in other leading shopping malls.



Music to enjoy with your coffee

WHAT goes well with coffee?

Good music, that's what.

Dyna Music is releasing four compact discs for coffee and music lovers. These are compilations of oldies but goodies.

One volume is called "Café de Paris." It has typical accordion music that conjures images of a trip to Paris, the sidewalk cafés, couples walking hand in hand, painters and street performers.

"Café Noir—Coffee Crime" paints images of black coffee, cigarette smoke, hat and famous trench coat. Humphrey Bogart, unshaven, is on the track of his next case. Musical pieces from "Spellbound," "Slaughter on 10th Avenue," "Goldfinger" and "Peter Gunn" are only a few of the many tracks here.

"Combo Juniors Band: Café au Lait" has rhythms like "Oye Como Va," "Sea of Love," "Celebration."

And then there's "The Classics: Café Bossa;" which has, among others, "Besame Mucho," "Quizas, Quizas, Quizas," "Historia de un Amor."

Coffee has never tasted so good when accompanied by music from these albums.

Rod Stewart, Cher together

DUETS by recording superstars are tricky stuff. Though public curiosity is higher given each artist's following, there is always danger of personalities overriding the merits of the music.

In some cases, too, the dream collaboration turns into a nightmare. One artist is accidentally exposed as inferior to his partner, resulting in a circus-like clash of titans, cruelly footnoted in the pages of "What were they thinking?" section of pop music history.

Fortunately, Rod Stewart avoids these traps. In his latest single, "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered," the rock superstar thoughtfully picked out perennial diva Cher to deliver work that's understandably chic, and so classic.

The first single from Rod's just released album "The Great American Songbook: Volume II," "Bewitched is an update of the 1940s standard remade a number of times by heavyweights Sarah

ROD/ C2-6

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ENTERTAINMENT

Gary V home for the holidays

ALTHOUGH he has spent a lot of his time sharing his "pure energy" in different foreign concert venues such as Singapore, Germany, the US, Canada, Switzerland, Hong Kong and China, Gary Valenciano is home for the holidays this time.

On this his 20th year in the business, Gary made major strides on all fronts, starting with his victories in the recording scene. A treat to his fans are two albums he produced under the Universal Records label: an instrumental album entitled "Beyond Words," which features his music as performed by top caliber instrumentalists such as co-TOYM awardees Raul Sunico and Tony Maigue, and a compilation of movie theme songs, called "Gary V At The Movies," which recently turned platinum.

His album "Revive" also gave him a quintuple record award. "Revive" is one of his most successful albums to date, having sold more than 150,000 copies. His "Greatest Hits" and "Shout for Joy" albums have sold over 200,000 copies.

He did a successful 10-night concert series at the Music Museum, after which he had a two-night anniversary concert called "Gary V XXtreme" at the Araneta Coliseum. Despite the competition from international artists who performed in Manila at the same last November, Gary surpassed expectations.

He recently became a semi-regular host/performer on "ASAP Mania" of ABS-CBN.

As the first Unicef Ambassador of Goodwill for the Philippines, and one of only about a dozen appointed country ambassadors worldwide, Gary was the first celebrity to trek to many towns in the Mountain Province championing the children in the area.

Apart from pitching for ABS Bitter Herbs, Gary was also chosen to be an endorser for Anonymous, an apparel brand.

As an artist, Gary is the first celebrity in the world to have a Sennheiser microphone named after him, the Gary V Evolution Series Limited Edition Microphone.

Gary brings tidings of great joy through his music with a free concert at the amphitheater of the Marikina Riverbanks on Dec. 30, 2003. The concert is a project of the Marikina City government. Gary will also be at The Venue in Davao on Dec. 28 for the 25th anniversary of NCCC.

AFTER 20 years, Gary V is a multi-platinum recording artist, a Unicef ambassador of goodwill, product endorser and bringer of good tidings.

Bring the Hot Babes home

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Viva Productions and Celebrity Dream Mates are releasing the Viva Hot Babes full length, life size body pillows featuring Maui, Katya, Andrea, Jen, Myles, Gwen, Kristina and Hazel.

The Hot Babes come with interchangeable covers. Sleep with Maui on Mondays, Andrea on Tuesday, and Gwen on Wednesday, and so on and so forth. Sleep with a different Hot babe every day.

There are even three-dimensional "X" versions that can be ordered only by dialing 924-4809 for delivery.

Only 1,000 body pillows of each Hot babe will be made. Make sure it's the real deal by looking for the numbered holographic sticker to certify authenticity.

The Viva Hot Babe body pillows are P1,495 each and pillow covers are P999 at selected malls and Video City outlets.

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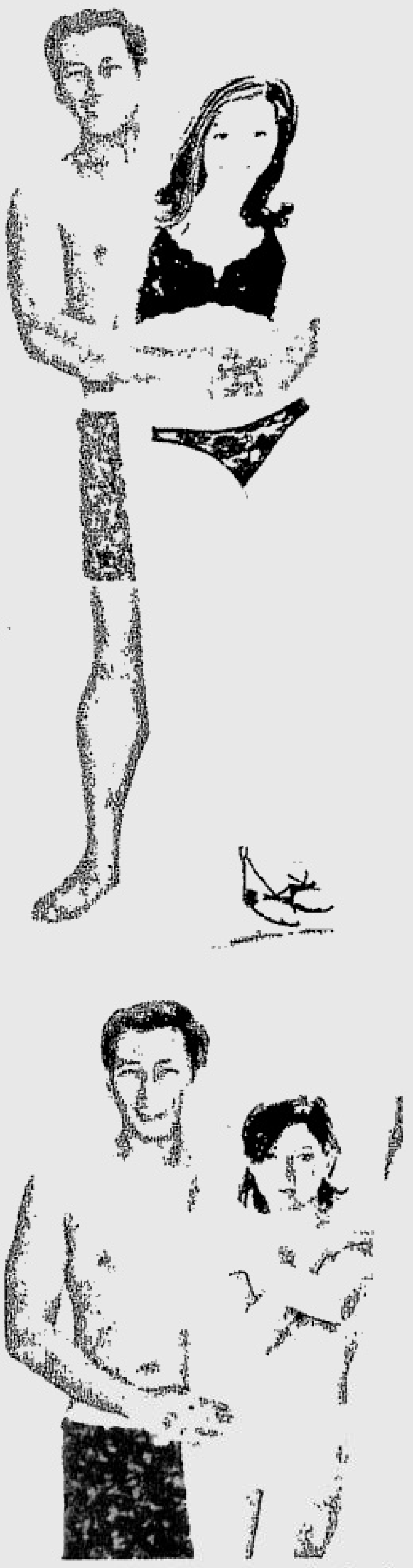
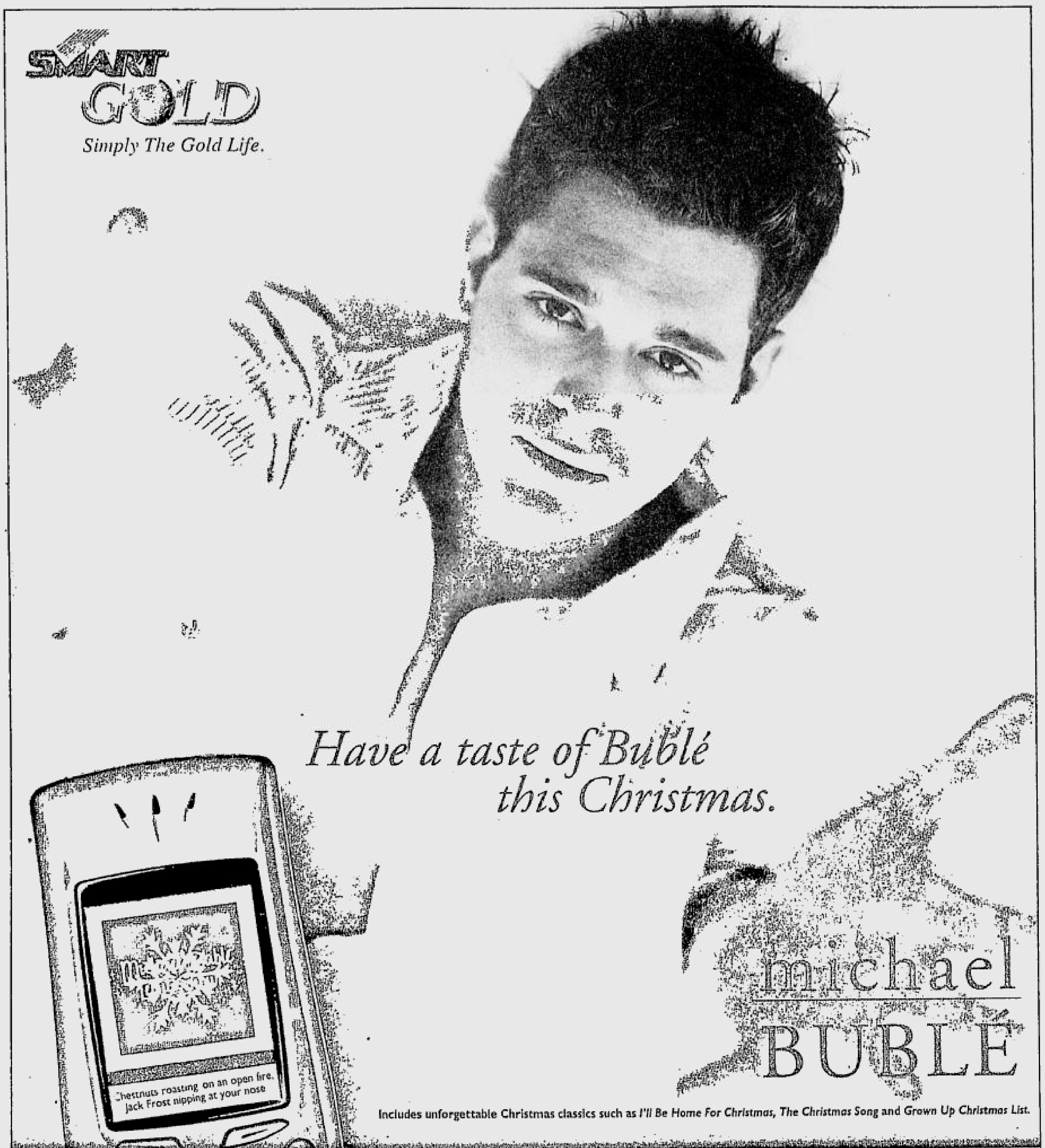


PILLOW TALK with Katya Santos (top) and Maui Taylor



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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

Sunday LIFESTYLE

A METAL cylinder for *puto bumbong* greased with butter is half-filled with a milled mixture of ordinary rice and glutinous wild rice.

As Pinoy as 'simbang gabi'

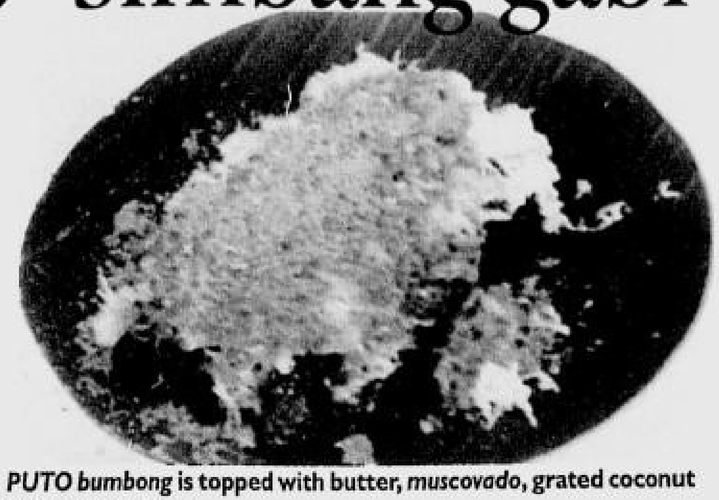
Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Betoy Johnson

PUTO bumbong and *bibingka* are two native holiday treats that are inextricably bound to the pre-drawn Misa de Gallo, which starts Dec. 16 and is held everyday for nine days until Christmas Day.

In the city, even well-dressed matrons buy these delicacies—dripping with melted butter and sprinkled with grated coconut—right after attending the dawn Mass.

Puto Bumbong is a delicacy that is especially intended for Christmas. "*Puto*" means steamed glutinous rice, and "*bumbong*" means bamboo

AS PINOY/ D2



PUTO bumbong **is topped with butter, *muscovado*, grated coconut and sesame seeds.**

IN THIS ISSUE

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What's hot in 2004 /J1

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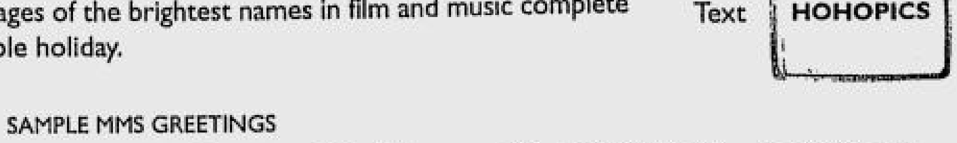

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(FROM left) Mailene Rivas, Ragie delos Santos and Lucy Villegas of Mommy Lucy's Special Bibingka and Puto Bungbong

***BIBINGKA galapong* is mixed with red egg and native white cheese before it's baked.**

As Pinoy as 'simbang gabi'

From page D1

cannon. It is a purple-colored food cooked in standing bamboo or metal tubes attached to a steam-producing tin can or cylinder that is mounted on a small pot of boiling water or steam.

Bibingka is a round cake made of glutinous rice, baked over and under live coal. It is garnished with slices of salted duck egg and native white cheese, slathered with butter or margarine and showered with grated coconut and sugar.

The number of street stalls serving these delicacies has dwindled through the years, as has the number of churchgoers during the *simbang gabi*. But there are still a few, like Mommy Lucy's Special Bibingka and Puto Bungbong, that offer such delicious treats to the faithful who attend the traditional celebrations.

Whole-year treats

A beautician for 10 years, Lucy Villegas had owned a beauty parlor in Lucban, Quezon before she ventured into the business of native delicacies in 1979. She learned the rudiments of making *bibingka* and *puto bumbong* from her late mother-in-law, Andrea Villegas.

Unlike other stalls and restaurants, Mommy Lucy's Special Bibingka and Puto Bungbong offers the delicious treats whole year round. For 24 years now, Villegas has been catering for hotels, restaurants, bazaars, parties and even Congress and Malacañang.

"We were so thrilled when we were invited to Malacañang at the time US President Bush visited our country," says Villegas, who was also recently invited by the Department of Tourism to one of its events held in Hong Kong.

A family enterprise, Mommy Lucy's Special Bibingka and Puto Bungbong (tels. 2546868, 0916-7755897) has an outlet at the Aristocrat on Roxas Boulevard, 1373 R.A. Reyes St., Manila, which is open 24 hours daily.

Villegas manages the outlet and catering together with her children Jun and Annie and daughter-in-law Roselle.

"The peak seasons for our business are Christmas and Holy Week. Right now, we do daily catering for several functions," Villegas says.

A hundred pieces of *bibingka* and *puto bumbong* are offered for P7,000 at catering events. But when one buys them from the stall, *bibingka* is priced at P60 and *puto bumbong* at P50.

Puto bumbong has ordinary glutinous rice, *pirurutong* (glutinous wild rice), butter, *muscovado*, sesame seeds and grated coconut.

"We don't put any coloring in our *puto bumbong*," Villegas says.

Bibingka, on the other hand, has *galapong* (batter that is produced when a mixture of rice and water is ground), native white cheese, red egg, grated coconut, grated cheese and butter.

"Mixing the native white cheese and salted egg with *galapong* makes the finished product more delicious," she says.

For all that work, Villegas earns only P20 per piece. "It's enough profit for us," she says. Besides, selling at affordable prices is our way of thanking the good Lord for the blessings He has given our family."

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph

What is the traditional dawn Mass without 'puto bumbong' and 'bibingka' to go with it?

***BIBINGKA* is slathered with butter and showered with grated coconut and sugar.**

PRODUCT ADVISORY

TO ALL OUR VALUED CUSTOMERS:

We would like to inform you that our recent production batches of LACTOVITALE and LACTOPAFI products utilized newly produced molasses as one of its raw materials. Because of this, you may notice that the liquid preparation is currently lighter in color and in taste when compared to the previous production batches that we have released. However, we wish to advise that the molasses in our products only serves as "feeds" to the lactobacillus plantarum, and the SEASONAL VARIATION OF MOLASSES in taste and in color **does not at all affect** the propagation of lactobacilli bacteria, and hence **does not in any way affect the potency** of our products. We wish to inform you also that lactobacillus plantarum bacteria are in fact colorless and tasteless in raw, extracted form. We have clinical and laboratory tests, and even actual testimonies of regular users of our products to support this advisory; and we advise our valued customers not to subscribe to rumors and baseless allegation of some unscrupulous parties that we have modified or altered our original formula for LACTOVITALE and LACTOPAFI. Our products are **100% natural** and we do not intend to **alter** or artificially correct seasonal variations in some of our ingredients through the use of **artificial flavorings or coloring**. We wish to give you only the purest, unadulterated, and all-natural products at all times.

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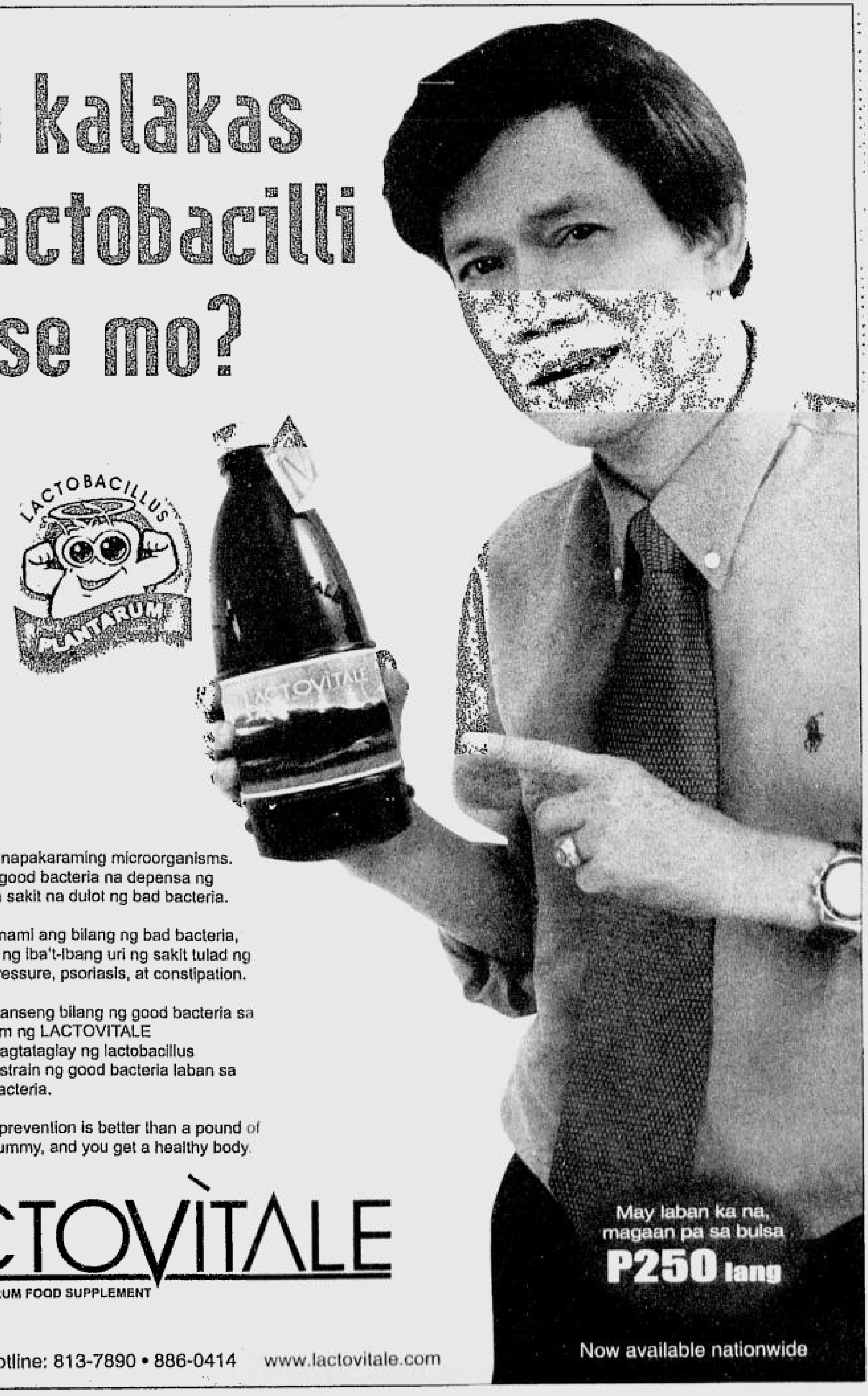

Sa loob ng ating tiyan, napakaraming microorganisms. Kasama dito ang mga good bacteria na depensa ng ating katawan laban sa sakit na dulot ng bad bacteria.

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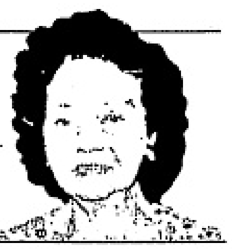

Tita Dulce

You're in the wrong sex. We desire brains and great looks in a man, but men are intimidated by those same virtues in a woman

DEAR Tita Dulce,

I am 26 but have never been in a relationship. I focused my attention on my academics, both in my graduate and postgraduate studies. I'm intellectually and physically gifted, but men seem to avoid me like a plague.

All my dinner dates ended after the first meeting. My friends tell me that I always talk with depth. But the men I dined out with were also U.P. graduates, so I assumed we were on the same wavelength.

And how I can I not talk with depth? I don't know much street words and jokes or rock band music. I'm into Strauss these past weeks and I can hum his Emperor Waltz, and I'm also into ballet.

Of course, except for ballet, I don't mention those other things to my dates or they might get flabbergasted and walk out.

I think the problem is that I'm too wholesome and straight, which turn guys off. For example, when asked about a national issue, my nature is to answer with some sense because I'm being honed to be an economist. I'm also into writing research papers, which demand analytical thinking.

I can't just hide that side of me. Maybe only an older and super smart guy could appreciate me.

Tita, I consciously make an effort to be sensitive and to meet the mind of my dates halfway to make them comfortable. But except for my sexiness, they don't seem to appreciate me. I think I intimidate them intellectually, although, of course, I make a lot of effort not to let them feel that.

Still, the rejection hurts. Is something wrong with me?

Chloe

If you have those very same brains and looks and you were a man, you'd have long been taken or would at least be spoken for by now.

Women compete for such a man. A husband with such brains would ensure food on the table, and his good looks would ensure a pleasant scene to wake up to.

So, is there something wrong with you? Yes. You're in the wrong sex. Such is the bias in our culture of matrimony and heterosexual ties. We desire brains and great looks in a man, but men are intimidated by those same virtues in a woman.

The only women who survive that curse are those in whom—by nature, nurture or design—beauty is highlighted and high IQ is toned down.

I see that you have been trying to tone down yours. But, if as you said, you have to make "conscious efforts" to achieve that, I'm afraid you're a long way from catching your man.

The male antennae quickly pick up such attempts at concealment and send burning messages to the male ego to haul his entire corpus and flee.

As I see it, you have two options: One, practice harder on transforming yourself (outwardly at least) to the sought-after pretty woman with an "inner strength" (translation: hidden high IQ, used only when the life or career of her husband is threatened).

Or, two, resign yourself to the possibility of being a highly successful professional single old maid.

The first option, of course, is fraudulent and makes nil the possibility of a long and happy marriage. The second, on the other hand, is honest but is likely to be lonely.

The latter does not have to be lonely, of course. There is always the likelihood that you'd still meet the man to whom you won't have to act dumb because, overcome by love, you'd be tongue-tied and your brains would melt faster than it takes to boil the marrow in a cow's thigh bone into a thick bulalo soup.

E-mail titadulce@netscape.net or send letters to P.O. Box 2353, Makati CPO 1263 Makati City, or PDI, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City.

St. Rita College's alumni homecoming

THE graduates of St. Rita College in Parañaque are invited to its grand alumni homecoming today at SRC-Parañaque school compound. Call Sr. Marcela at 8264790.

Theme park hosts activities for underprivileged kids

ENCHANTED Kingdom will host a series of activities for underprivileged children under the care of various institutions.

EK will donate all ticket revenues made in the last hour of operations on Dec. 24 and 31.

A storytelling is ongoing at the park. A number of celebrities will bring Christmas cheer to kids. They are Sen. Noli de Castro (today), Bobby Yan (Dec. 27) and Tirso Cruz III (Dec. 28).

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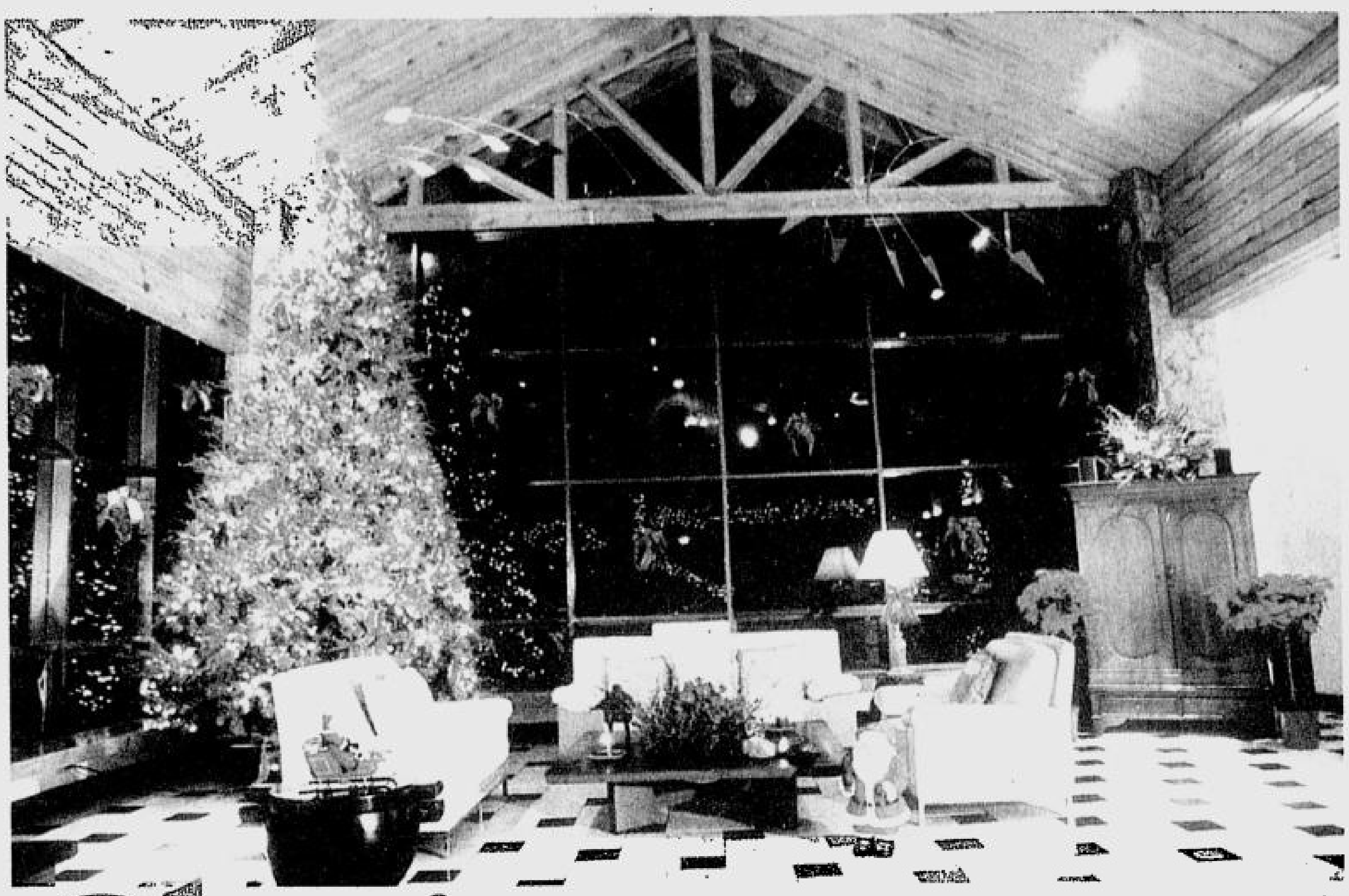

SOME LIKE IT COLD. All ready for Christmas is this Baguio hideaway with its 20-ft Christmas tree all aglow with lights and red trimmings; the 25-ft high ceiling showcases Raul Julian's red-and-blue mobile.

The holiday season is always a nice time to gather with family and friends in this Baguio home

IGOROT baskets high on a ledge are practical Baguio home accessories. Even this window that looks out to the air shaft has the holiday look.

Christmas lives here

Text by Chelo Banal-Formoso
Photos by Egay Montana

CHRISTMAS is alive and well and shimmering wondrously in this Baguio home of a married couple who have requested anonymity. It arrived right after Halloween when the 20-ft tree was put up, strewn with lights and trimmed with shiny berries of all sizes, beaded apples, velvet ribbons, shiny and matte balls—all in holiday red.

"This is the first Christmas I'm decorating with red," says the mistress of the house. "I've always been partial to burgundy because it's a warm color."

Baguio is where hearth and home are for her and her husband, not just on Christmas but for always, having been born and raised there. Their thriving export business requires them to oversee two factories and fill orders all week long in dusty and dreary Metro Manila, but as soon as the Christmas party for their employees is over, the couple retreats to their Baguio home to spend the holidays with their grown children and other close of kin.

It is a house they genuinely enjoy coming home to, and worth the nine-hour drive it now takes because of scattered road work along the North Expressway. It sits atop a four-story building on a nondescript winding road near Session Road and the new SM mall. The ground floor is a garage, and the basement, a storage area and drivers' room. The two middle floors house two units each (the couple's elder son lives in one with his own family and his younger brother; the wife's two brothers and a sister each occupy three units with their families). And the top floor, the couple's country retreat cum clubhouse for all, is where Christmas sparkles ever so dreamily.

The house took 18 months of building work. "We didn't have an architect, just a contractor," the husband discloses.

Making sure and safe

Knowing Baguio is an earthquake zone, they hired a consultant to test the building's foundation. "That caused a little bit of delay there, but we wanted to be sure and safe," says the wife.

The 25-ft high cathedral ceiling alone took a lot of brains and brawn to finish. "We would come up once every two months to look in on the construction, and find some things not to our liking," recalls the wife.

The owners had a change of heart upon seeing the hard plywood ceiling that didn't quite complement the design of the house, so out they went and pine wood was used instead.

"I really love pine wood," says the wife. Even in her father's house, a bungalow that they had torn down to be able to build on the property, they had pine wood walls and flooring and beams. Her brother saved them and reused them in his unit.

The couple also switched the stairway to the attic to a spiral one. Some walls had to be paneled with pine wood for better acoustics. The foyer was a last-minute addition. "Where's the mystery?" the homeowners asked. Now the cathedral ceiling is always a pleasant surprise to anyone who walks in from that foyer.

The small kitchen, too, was an afterthought. The wife saw no need for one. After all, her sister, who lives in one of the other units, has a catering business that feeds the whole family whenever the couple is in town. The kitchen was put in only when it was pointed out that there was a need for a wash-and-prep area even for catered meals.

All these changes easily cost them P2 million more, not to mention a lot of time. But the

CHRISTMAS/ E2

KENNON stones in four shades of gray were used for this fireplace and all the other columns in the house.

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ALL SET FOR THE HOLIDAYS. The dining table, four meters long, is laid out with a candelabra centerpiece and handwoven place mats from Easter School in Christmas colors.

Christmas . . .

From page E1

outcome is worth its weight in gold, and the wait.

The result is a structure that maximizes space and light. The stark white walls and the palette of muted gray Kennon stone columns are enlivened with a dash of beige and the warm glow from the New Zealand pine wood. The couple had to use imported wood because "there's a ban on using Benguet pine."

Glass walls on two sides lend a conservatory effect to this mountain retreat, allowing sunshine to stream in and creating an uplifting feel. The glass was filmed to block UV rays. "We were warned that the strong sunlight would cause the furniture, the wood and the paintings to fade," says the husband. Without the tint, quips the wife, "we would have to eat breakfast wearing sunglasses."

Scent of pines

The bottom glass panes can be opened and closed. "I was afraid not much air would come in with the windows down there, but I was wrong," says the mistress. Despite the nip in the air all day and all night in Baguio, windows have to be opened for better circulation. Plus the scent of pines is too precious to pass up.

The 360-sq m floor area looks so much more spacious yet intimate. The main living area is open like a social hall, in keeping with the character of the family that lives in the building.

There are four bedrooms with baths, two of which are up in the attic.

From the start, the wife had wanted a house where each age group would have its own corner. Little wonder that the house now has a music-and-games nook where one can play the piano, listen to CD music or play board games; a work-out corner where two exercise machines are parked; a TV area; and a mahjong corner up in the attic. "We can have a whole bunch of people here without getting in each other's way," she notes.

They decided to keep it practical underfoot and went for Italian tiles. The white and black pattern required a skillful laying out. "I wanted a place where my grandchildren can camp because it's too cold to camp out in Baguio," says the lady of the house. The kids are also allowed to use their trikes inside the house.

Low-maintenance pieces

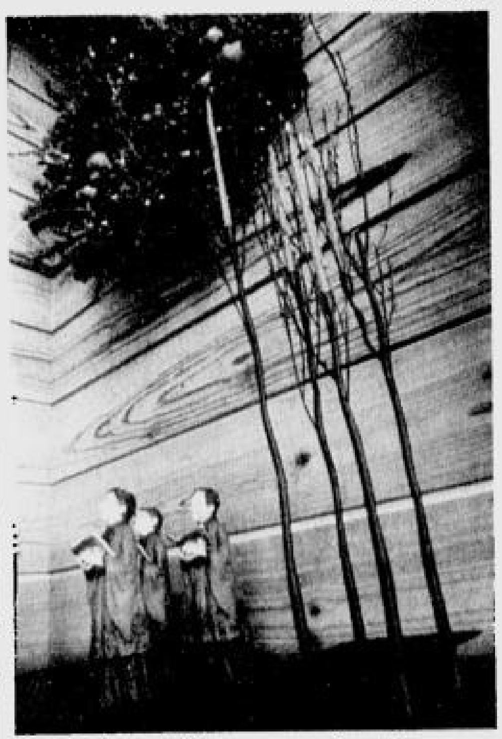
Couches and armchairs are in off white and black leather, a material that gives them a luxurious touch but also allows easy maintenance. "I chose leather because I didn't want to be always screaming at my grandchildren," says the wife.

Additional seating is provided by the long ledge by each glass wall. Even the dining chairs, bought from the Baguio market, are low maintenance. Chic plastic stackable chairs from Dimensione provide extra seating when there's company.

Overhead lighting is next to impossible but essential in a room with high ceiling. This Baguio hideaway uses halogen drop lights encased in pine boxes. A chandelier would have been nice, but the owners are quick to admit they're not chandelier people, so they instead installed a playful mobile from Raul Julian.

In place of stairs, the way from ground floor to any upper level is a ramp because the

CHRISTMAS/ E3



CHOIR boys, Christmas wreath and candelabra, all from Color It Christmas

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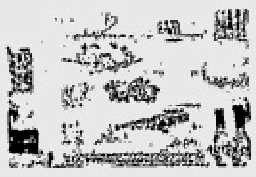

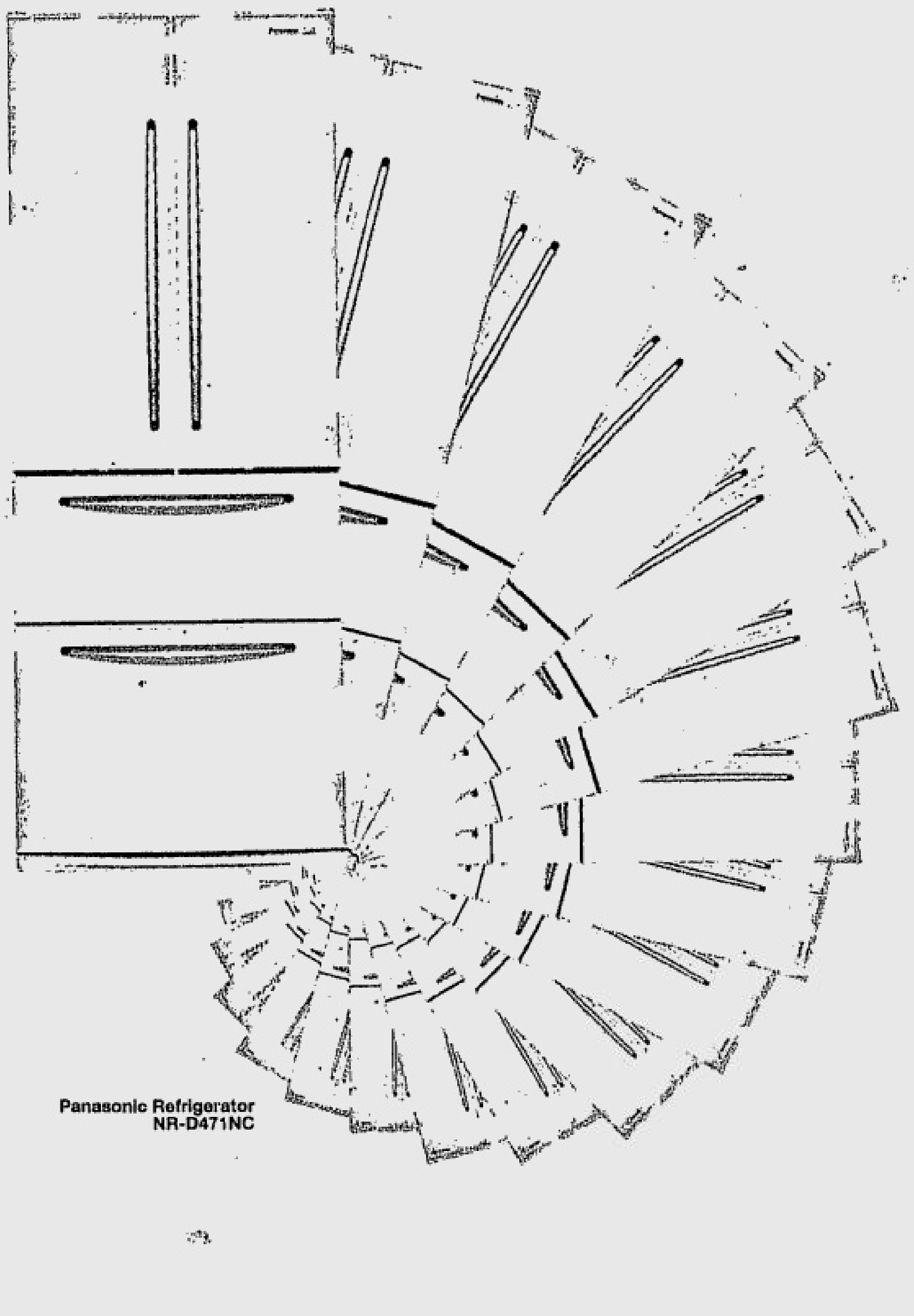

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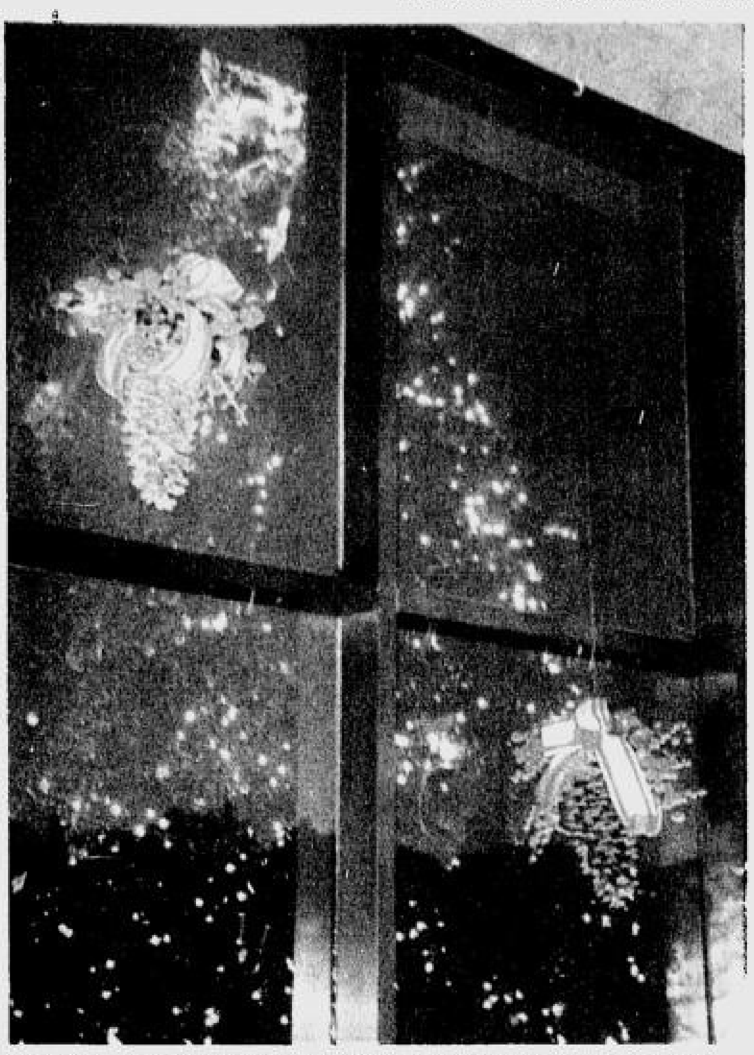


GIANT sugar pine cones from Oregon beribboned in red and gold

WELCOME, WELCOME. Wrought-iron tree adorned with balls of all sizes and colors, topiary and holiday arrangement in the foyer (left) and huge spray above the main door (above) are all from Color It Christmas.

Christmas . . . lives here

From page E2

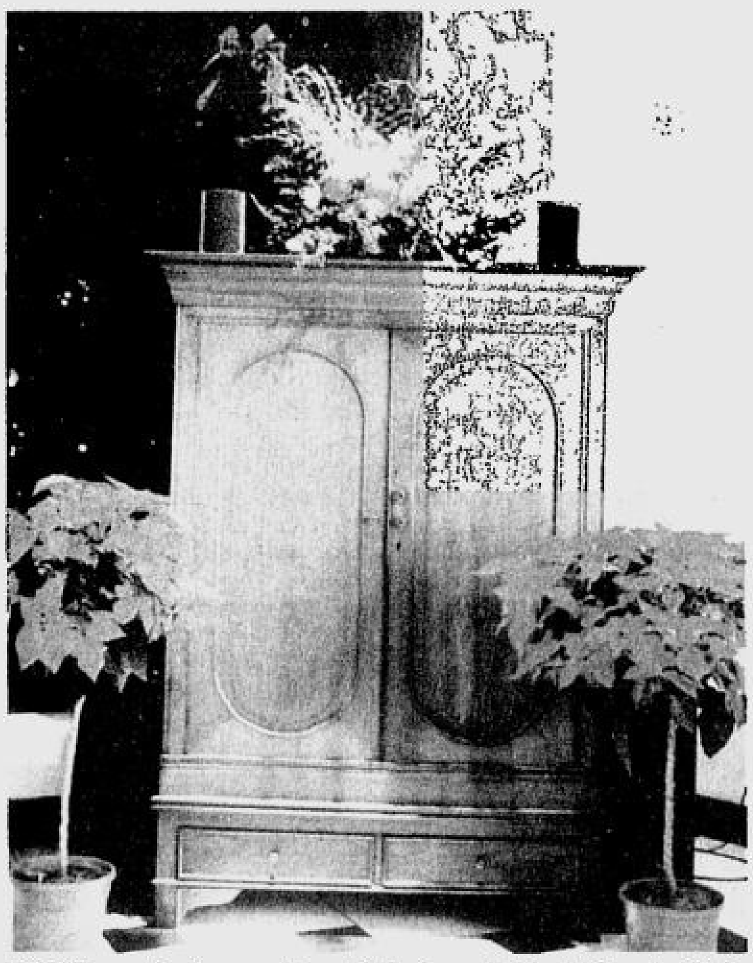
couple's younger son is wheelchair-bound. Not to worry, there's space reserved for an elevator for the day when the homeowners find going up the ramp on foot too taxing.

One of the best things about this country retreat is the fireplace built of Kennon stones, above which is mounted a faux ram head that was made out of leather by Baguio-based artist Peter Pinder. There is nothing like sitting by the fire on a chilly night.

Also notable are the couple's collectibles, which include benches by artist Benjie Reyes, mobiles by Raul Julian and sculptures by Ben-hur Villanueva.

Christmas is always a nice time to gather with family and friends in this spacious home. One can imagine what it was like to decorate the whole place to reflect the season's mirth. Color It Christmas came in to deck the house with a huge tree and a smaller one in the foyer, vari-sized Christmas wreaths, sprays and topi

CHRISTMAS/ E4



THIS "aparador" sourced from Pinky Gomez's Baguio Country Club shop is reinvented into an entertainment center. Basket of twigs, cones, berries and ribbons from Color It Christmas

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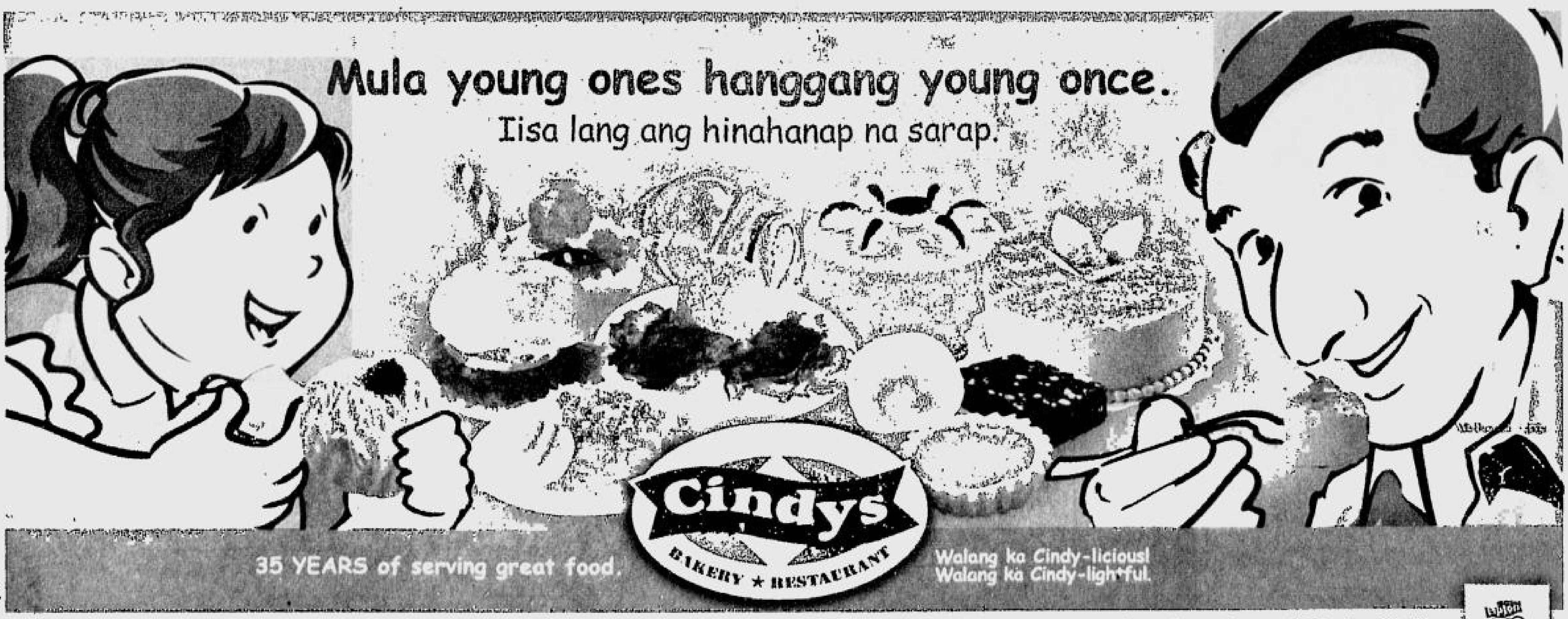
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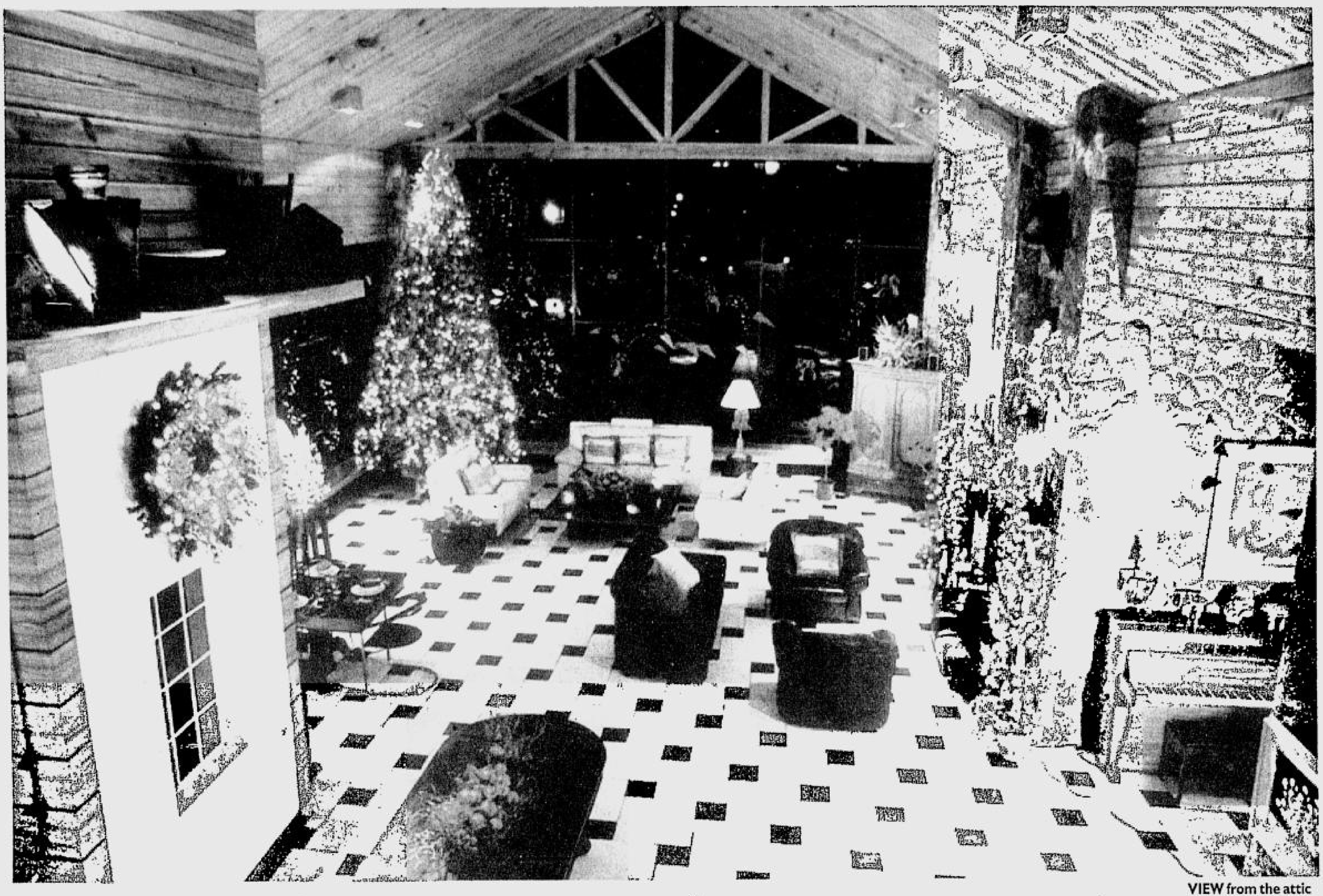
Lipton Ice Tea



VIEW from the attic balcony: a long vista through to the living room with its cathedral windows and high ceiling of New Zealand pine wood. White and black Italian tile flooring is practical. Music nook is on the right.

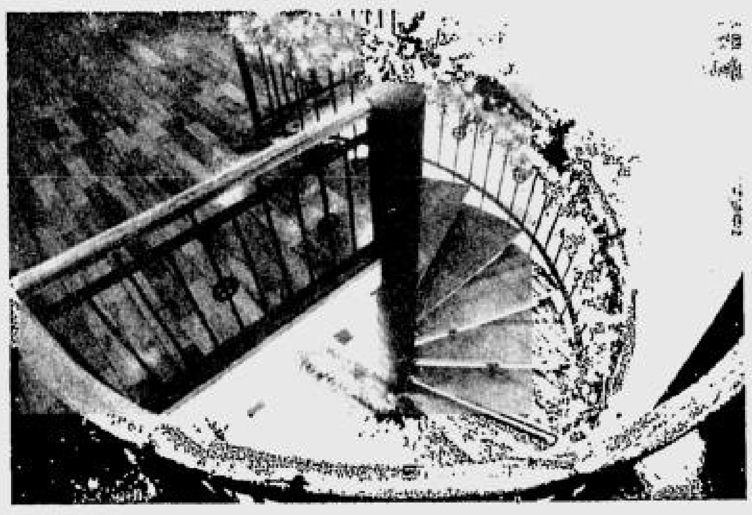
Christmas lives here

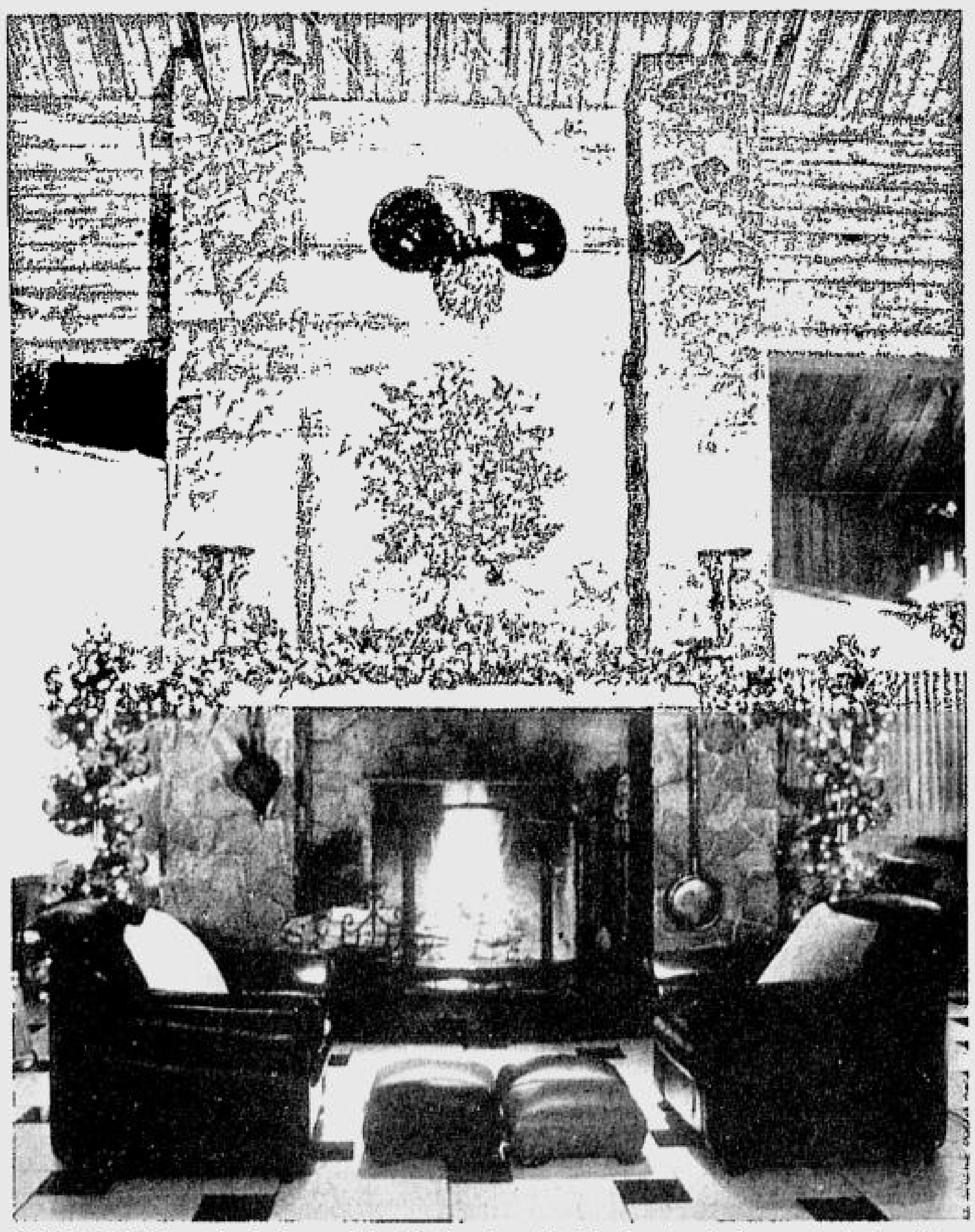
From page E3

aries, candelabras, centerpieces and other arrangements, using up thousands of lights. The effect is a glow that is at once magical and unmatched this side of Christmas.

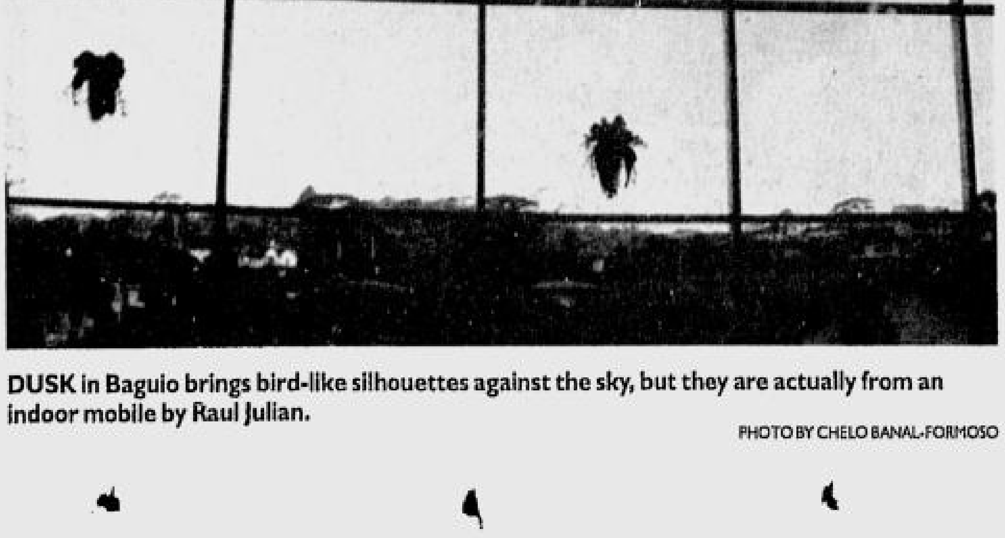
"Many of our friends come up to Baguio for the holidays and we always invite them for dinner here," says the wife. "In fact, we don't even have to invite them, they invite themselves." You would, too, if you saw their house.

"It's always hard to leave Baguio after Christmas," says the wife. "We keep putting off our trip back to Manila."



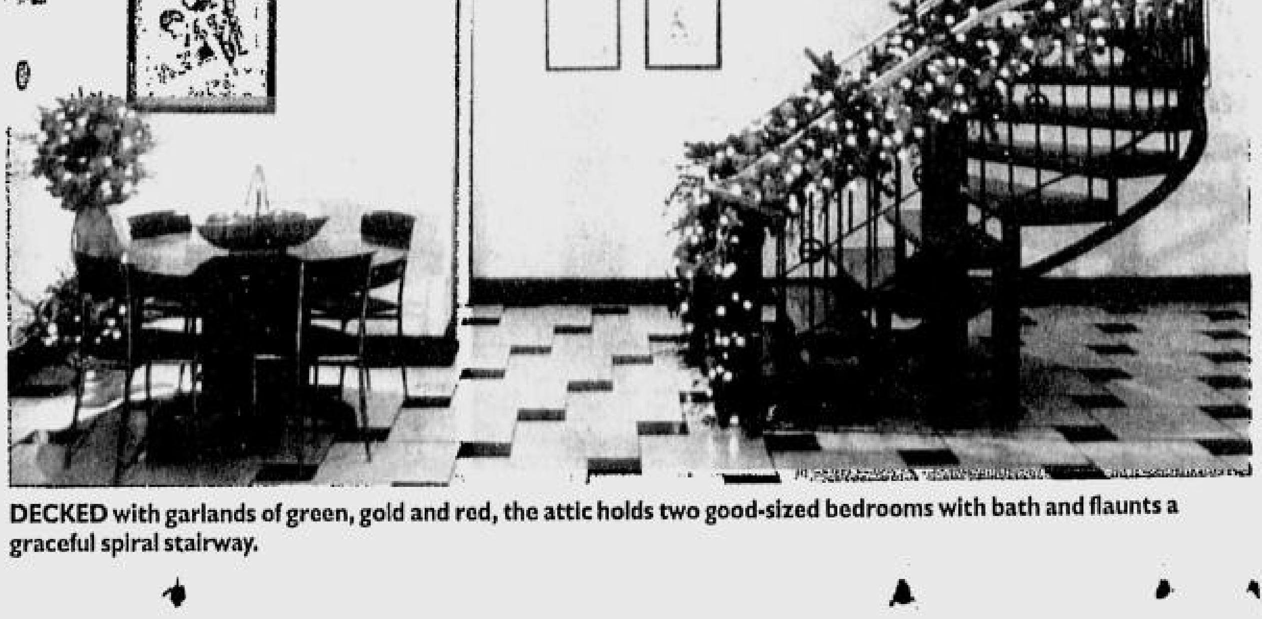


THE COZIEST spot in the house is by this fireplace. No hunting trophy is mounted above it but a faux ram head fashioned out of leather by Peter Pinder. Black leather armchairs and footstools are luxurious yet easy to maintain.

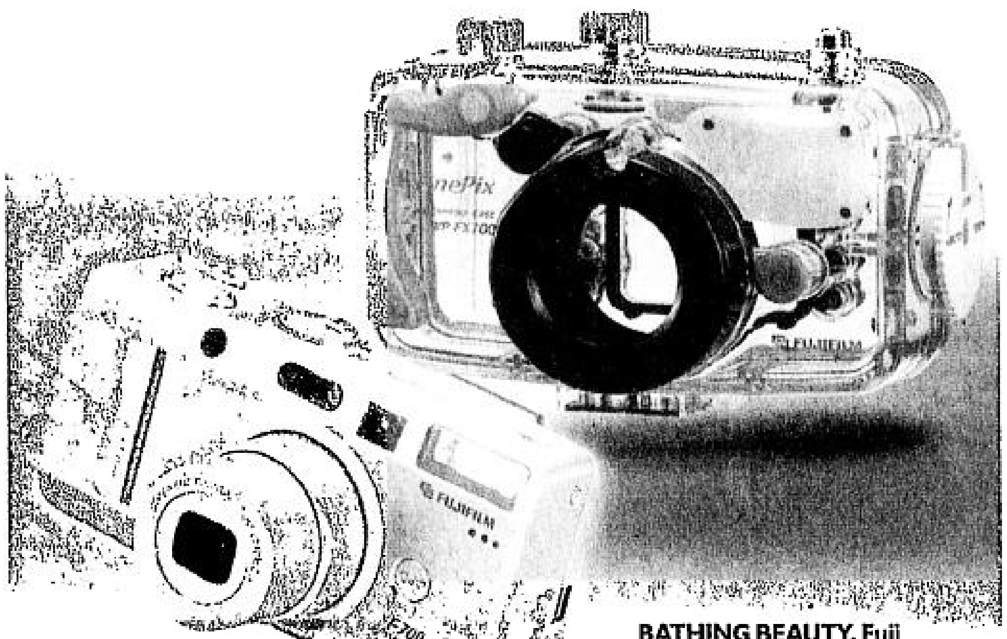


DUSK in Baguio brings bird-like silhouettes against the sky, but they are actually from an indoor mobile by Raul Julian.

PHOTO BY CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO



DECKED with garlands of green, gold and red, the attic holds two good-sized bedrooms with bath and flaunts a graceful spiral stairway.



BATHING BEAUTY. Fuji FinePix F700 digital camera and its Fuji FinePix F700 underwater housing

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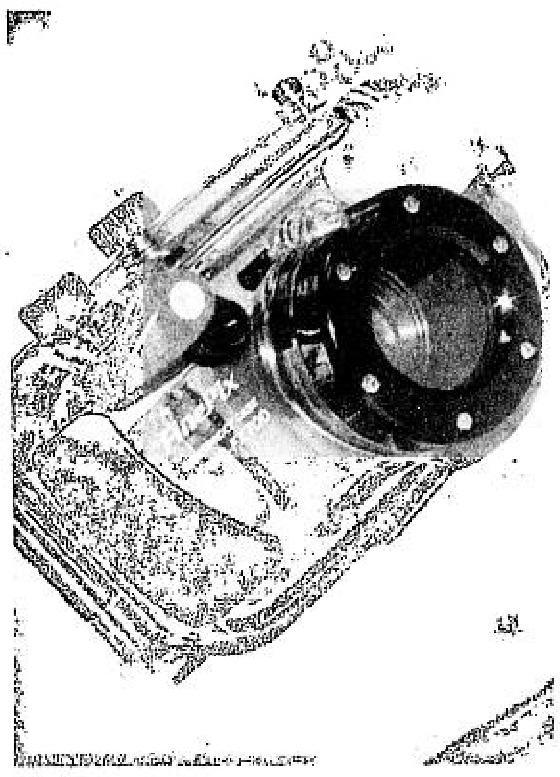

For people on your list who want near-film quality print experience from a digital camera, there is FujiFinePix F700. This camera combines the imaging performance of a 35mm film camera with the versatility of digital photography.

As convenient as the best film-based cameras, Finepix is also capable of capturing quality digital images because of the exclusive fourth generation Super CCD.

A new rapid continuous auto-focus on-demand mode is combined with a built-in focusing assist lamp and auto-focus capabilities.

Advanced movie mode allows the camera to record full VGA resolution with sound. Files can be downloaded simply by placing the camera on the cradle. Fujifilm's FinePix Viewer will do the rest.

The camera also has underwater housing to allow underwater photography up to 40 meters. The case protects the camera from water damage while allowing adjustments and the use of flash.

Available at Sanrio Photo galleries in Glorietta 2, SM City and Alabang Town Center.

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from the French Baker

In France, "le reveillion," or the Noche Buena feast, is capped off with a delicious Buche de Noel, or Chrismas log cake. Tradition dictates it must be made fresh and creamy. Which is why Johnlu Koa of French Baker uses only Magnolia Gold Butter when preparing this irresistibly rich concoction. Bon appetit!

The Buche de Noel cake is available at selected outlets of the French Baker this Christmas.

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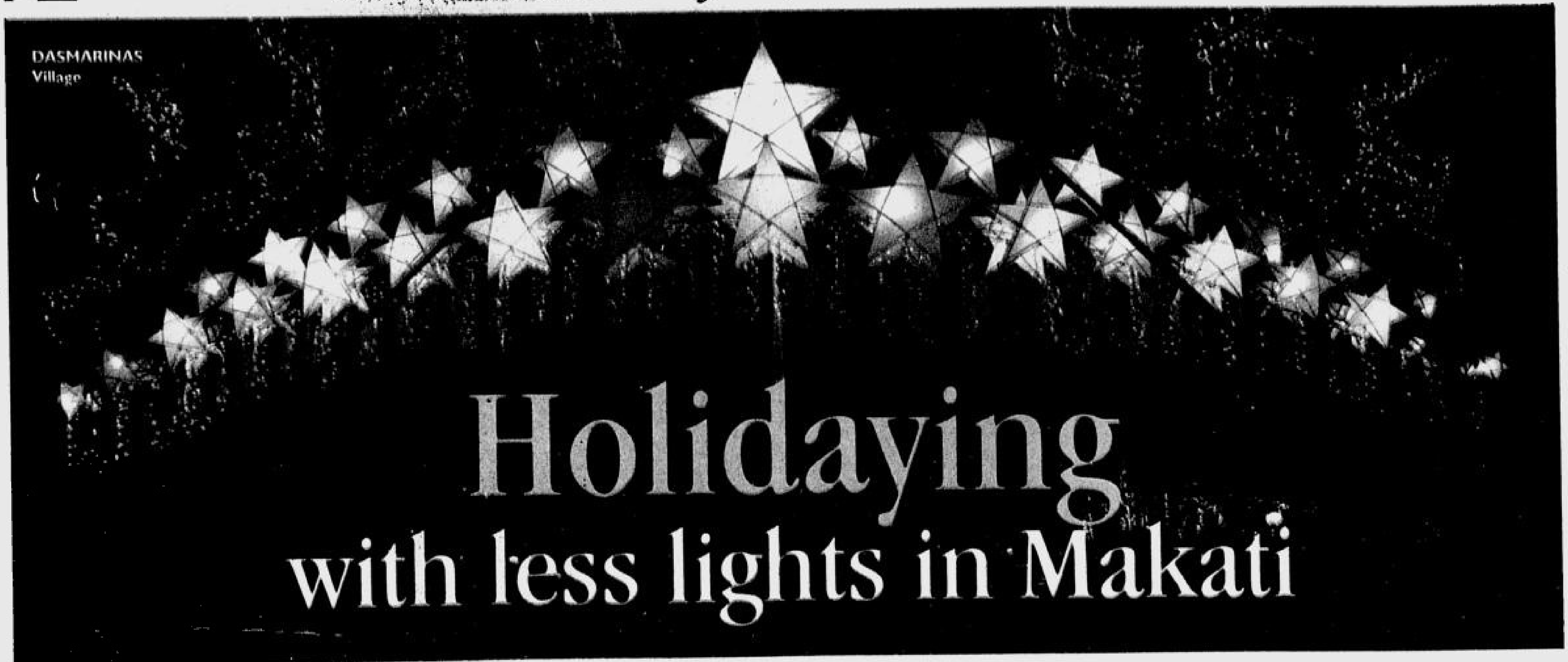
Holidaying with less lights in Makati



While the malls have Disney characters on parade, the rest of the country's business center seems more subdued

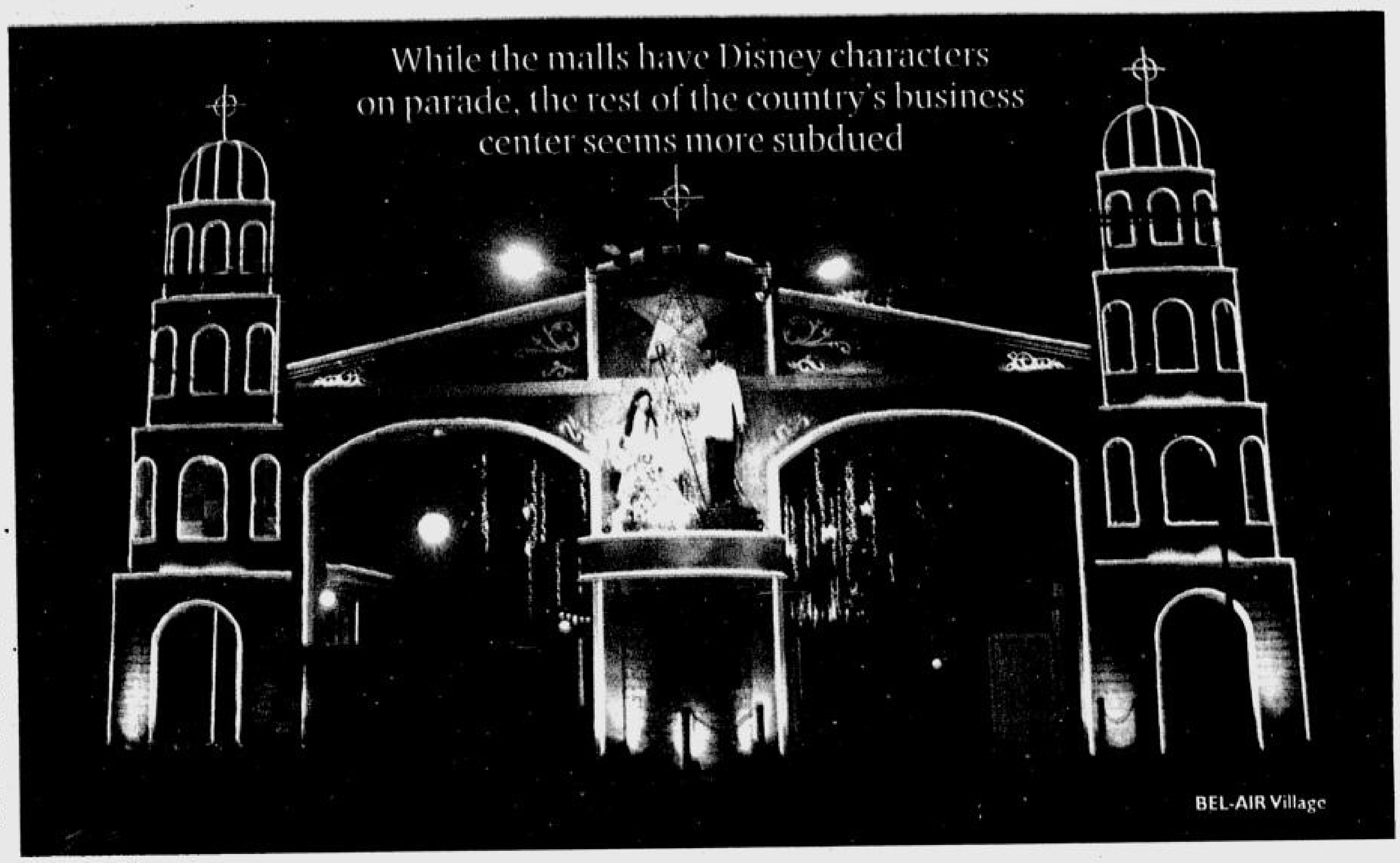
Text by Anne A. Jambora
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

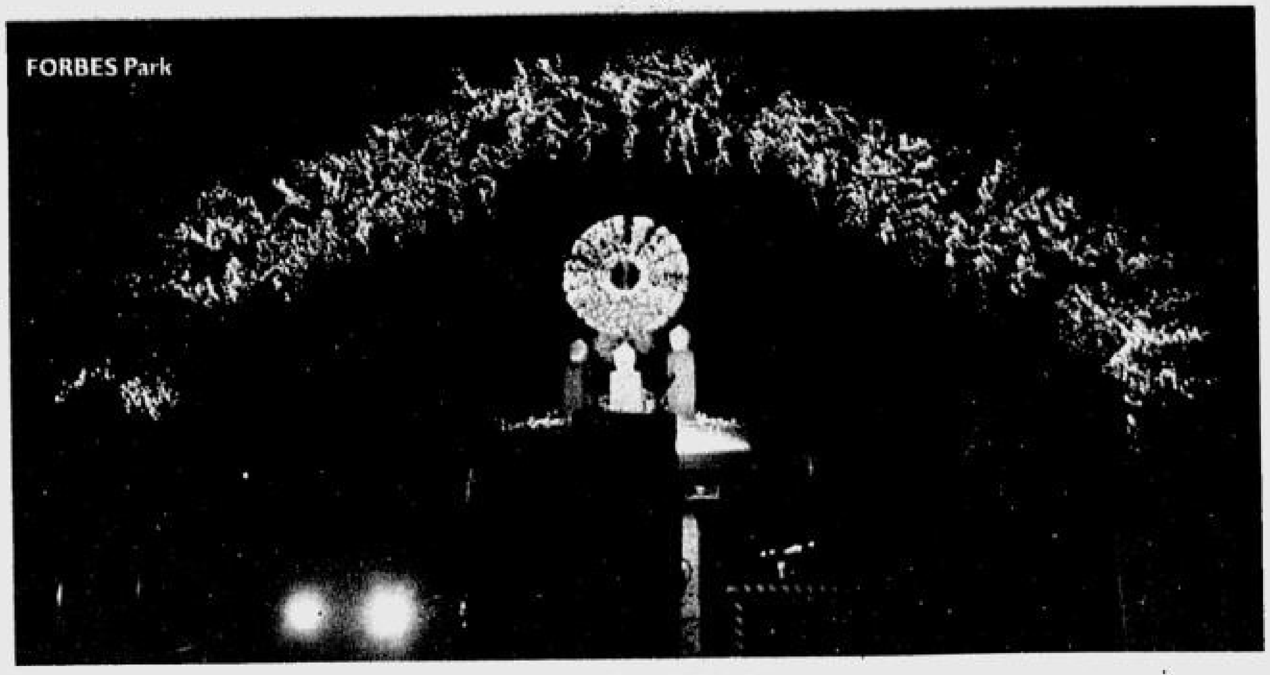
IN THIS season of cheers, Makati, the country's central business district, has once again chosen to conservatively dress the city streets and structures, brightening up alleys and buildings only with sporadic streams of Tivoli lights.

Time was when Ayala Avenue was a spectacular vision of luminosity, when families would drive on the street just to enjoy the wonderment of the view. Although Makati's premiere malls such as Glorietta and Greenbelt exhibit visual fantasies of Disney themes, the Christmas spirit is restrained in much of the city.

Restraint is observed in the exclusive, plush villages as well. While the display at the main entrance to Bel-Air Village on Jupiter Street—a *belen* in the middle of two bell towers—is unmistakably elegant, the tone is hushed, the lights are low-key, and the overall effect calming.

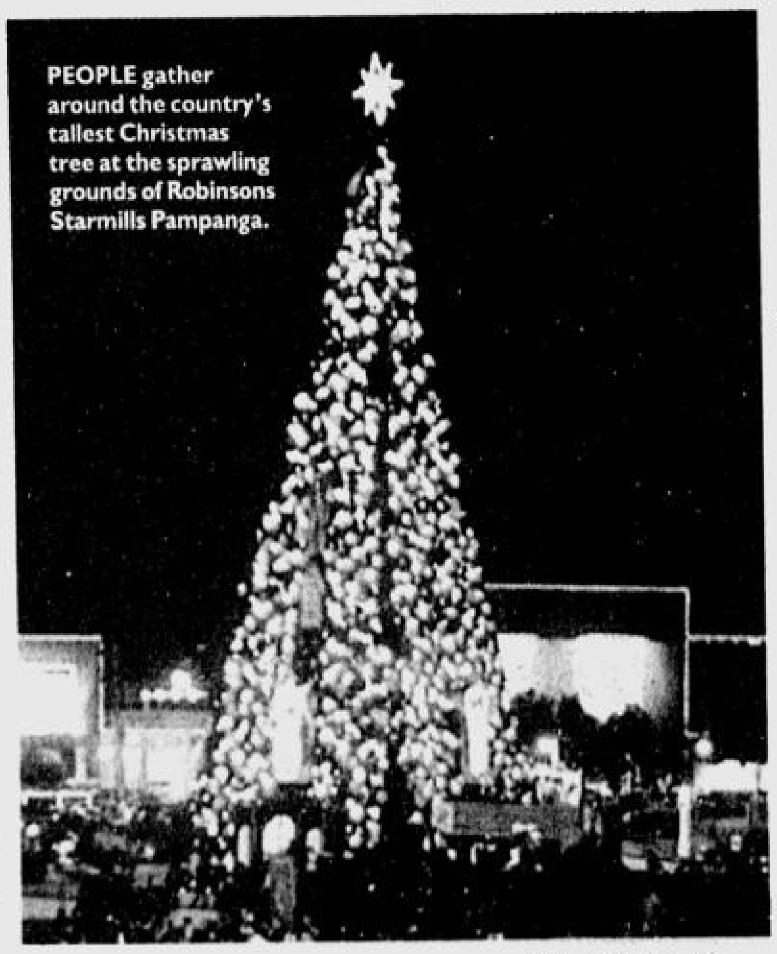
Urdaneta Village's attempt to join the holiday merriment is to go for an assorted display of decorative lanterns and hanging Christmas lights, a myriad of colors in chaotic frenzy reflective of the traffic just outside its cloistered shell. Candle motifs silently adorn the gates of Forbes Park, a more contemplative take on the holiday season. A stone's throw away is Dasmariñas Village, whose gates have star lanterns arched like a bridge from one end to the other and Tivoli reindeers seemingly waiting to take flight.





URDANETA Village

Country's tallest Christmas tree lights up


PEOPLE gather around the country's tallest Christmas tree at the sprawling grounds of Robinsons Starmills Pampanga.

THE COUNTRY'S tallest Christmas tree, measuring 117 feet, was officially lighted during a special event staged at the sprawling grounds of Robinsons Starmills Pampanga.

This magnificent display brightened up the night sky when local officials, as well as Robinsons Malls and Coke representatives, switched on the thousands of lights that decked the giant tree.

A mini concert featuring the country's youngest diva, Kyla, together with 17:28, regaled the audience with their Christmas renditions. The event was capped with a fireworks display.

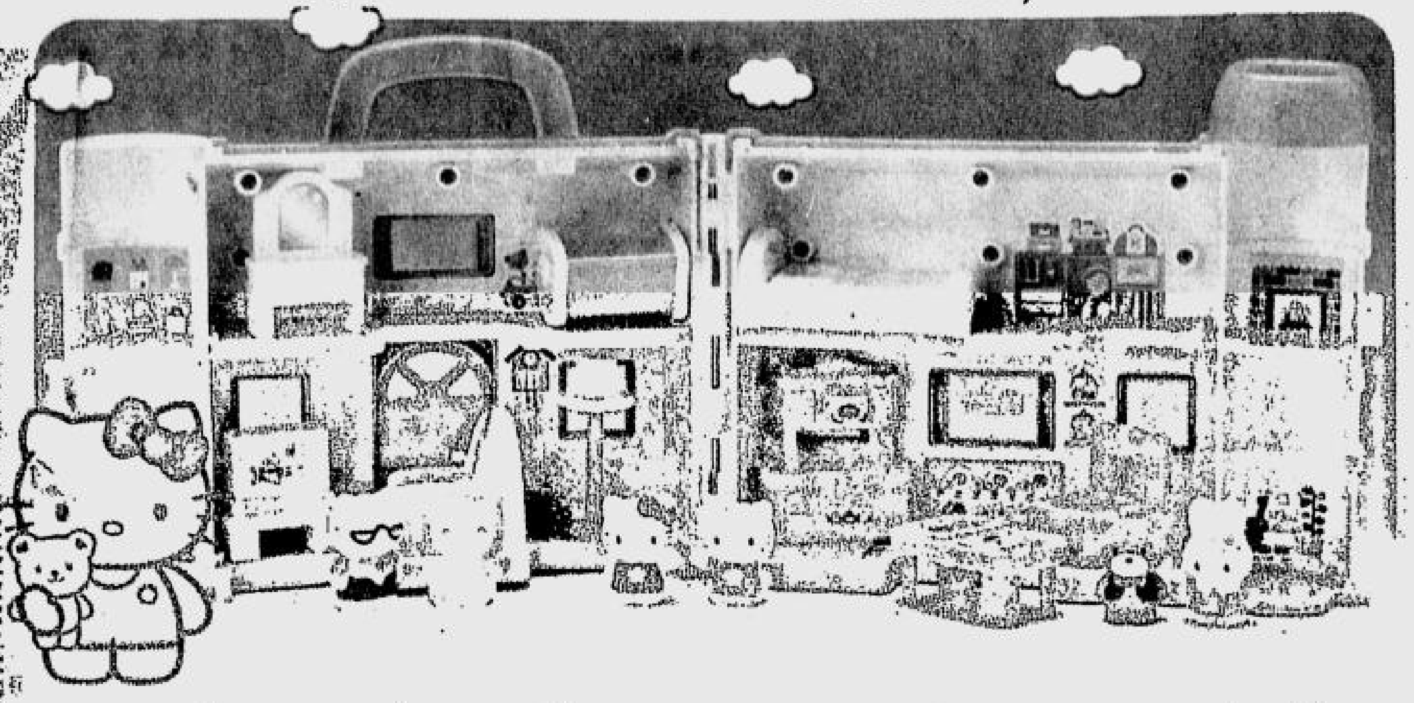
A joint collaboration with Coke, this Christmas tree can be viewed by the public until Jan. 4, 2004.

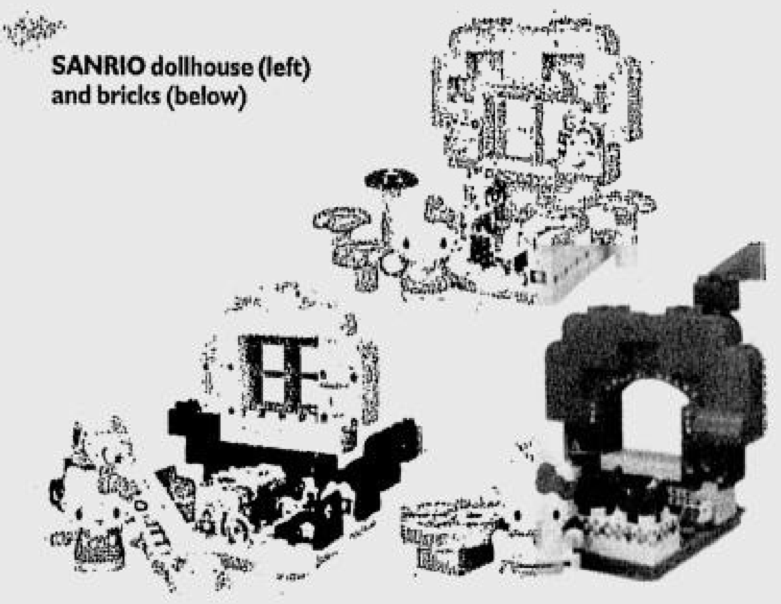
CITY tourism officer 'Ivan Henares

RLC Commericial Centers general manager Nick Caluag and Miss Robinsons Angel Montilla did the honor of switching on the thousands of lights that decked the giant tree.

RLC Commercial Centers officials Armina Mangune, ad and promo officer; Regina Balboa, public relations assistant; Tess Miranda, ad and promo manager; and Eunice Gonzalez, ad and promo director

A MINI concert featuring Kyla entertained the audience.





SANRIO dollhouse (left) and bricks (below)

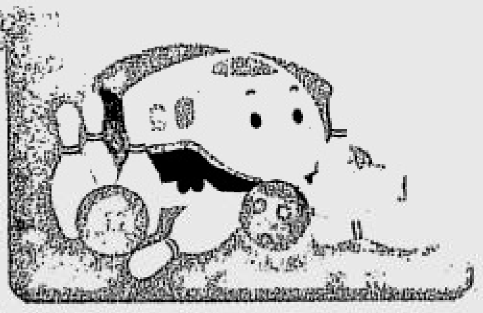
Make kids merry with favorite gifts

SANRIO brings holiday cheer to kids with its medley of favorite gifts.

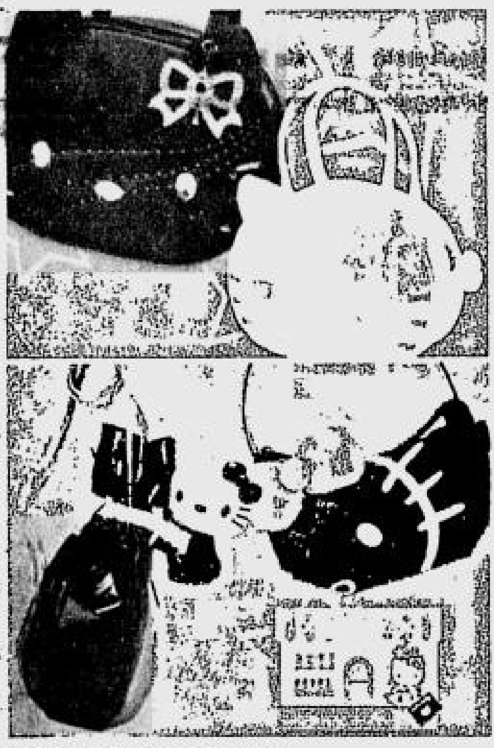
Whether for creative or active play, Hello Kitty and Shinkansen will provide hours of fun for kids and kids at heart. Hello Kitty's toy block sets and the Shinkansen bowling sets are just some of the gifts kids will love to get.

New York fashion is showcased in the new Hello Kitty Heatherette collection. The Hello Kitty Ball Bag fuses mesh and leather. Heatherette also presents the Hello Kitty Longhand Knapsack and the Hello Kitty Pink Enamel Bag with her signature big pink bow.

Gift Gate Inc. is the exclusive distributor of Sanrio, available in all Gift Gate and Sanrio Surprises Stores. Hello Kitty Heatherette Collection is available at Gift Gate Glorietta 2, SM Megamall, Alabang Town Center, Greenhills and SM City North Edsa.



BOWLING set



HEATHERETTE collection

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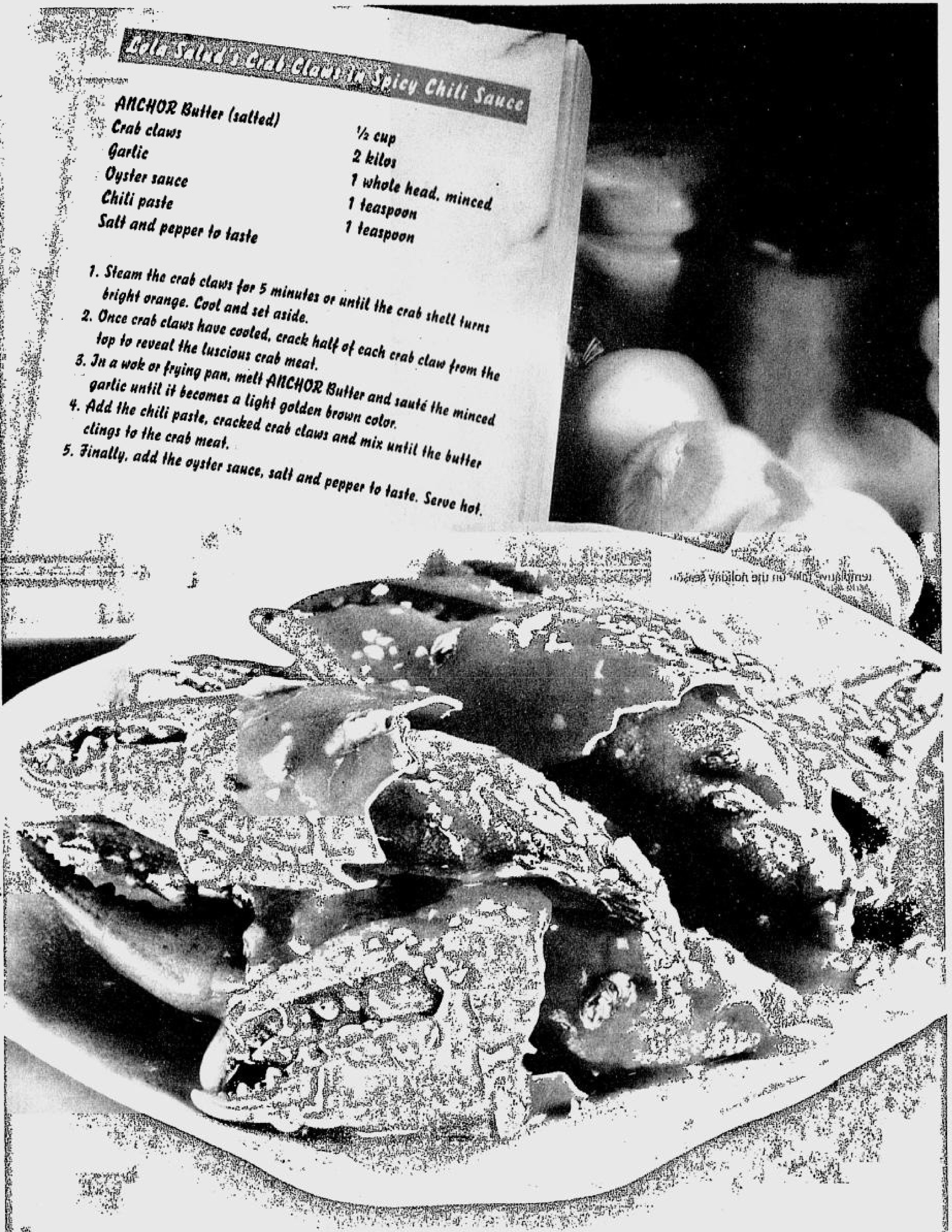

Lola Salud's Crab Claws in Spicy Chili Sauce

ANCHOR Butter (salted)	½ cup
Crab claws	2 kilos
Garlic	1 whole head, minced
Oyster sauce	1 teaspoon
Chili paste	1 teaspoon
Salt and pepper to taste	

1. Steam the crab claws for 5 minutes or until the crab shell turns bright orange. Cool and set aside.
2. Once crab claws have cooled, crack half of each crab claw from the top to reveal the luscious crab meat.
3. In a wok or frying pan, melt ANCHOR Butter and sauté the minced garlic until it becomes a light golden brown color.
4. Add the chili paste, cracked crab claws and mix until the butter clings to the crab meat.
5. Finally, add the oyster sauce, salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot.

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Sunday LIFESTYLE

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Jingle jangle white

HO HO HO. Bea Zobel Jr. and Virgie Ramos enjoy a laugh obviously at the expense of Martin Nievera at the white Christmas lunch launching the Swatch Jingle Jangle watch and Bijoux Starmony, both limited edition products to be raffled off Dec. 24 at Swatch store in Glorietta 4. Every P500 purchase of a Swatch watch entitles one to a raffle coupon.

NOBODY ushers in Christmas like Gift Gate's Virgie Ramos. Take it from us—nobody.

One year she coaxed this down-on-its-luck nation to make merry with Martin Nievera's "Can't Stop Christmas" and, true enough, we muddled through somehow. Another year she played Mrs. Claus to terminally ill children who had beseeched Make A Wish Foundation for sundry favors, and certainly gave the kids more than just goodwill and glad tidings.

This year, she dreamed up a white Christmas theme for the launch of the limited edition Swatch Bijoux Starmony and the Swatch 2003 Christmas watch, the Jingle Jangle.

Oh what fun!

Complete with snowflakes falling and bells ringing and—this one got director Rowell Santiago a bit rattled—carved ice reindeer melting, the event was held at the Swatch store in Glorietta 4. Well, not just the Swatch store really. The area surrounding the shop was walled off and turned into a winter wonderland for an intimate, sit-down lunch.

Seen dashing through the mall in white were Bea Zobel Jr. and Ino Manalo, both of the Metropolitan Museum of Manila; PDI President Sandy Prieto Romualdez and her sister, Lifestyle columnist and interior designer Tessa Prieto Valdes; architect Ed Calma and his wife Suzy; perform

JINGLE/ F2

ENGAGEMENT

The engagement is announce between **LANCE HEWETT** of Bridgetown, Western Australia & **MARISOL R. PAPA** of Quezon City, Philippines from December 12, 2003.

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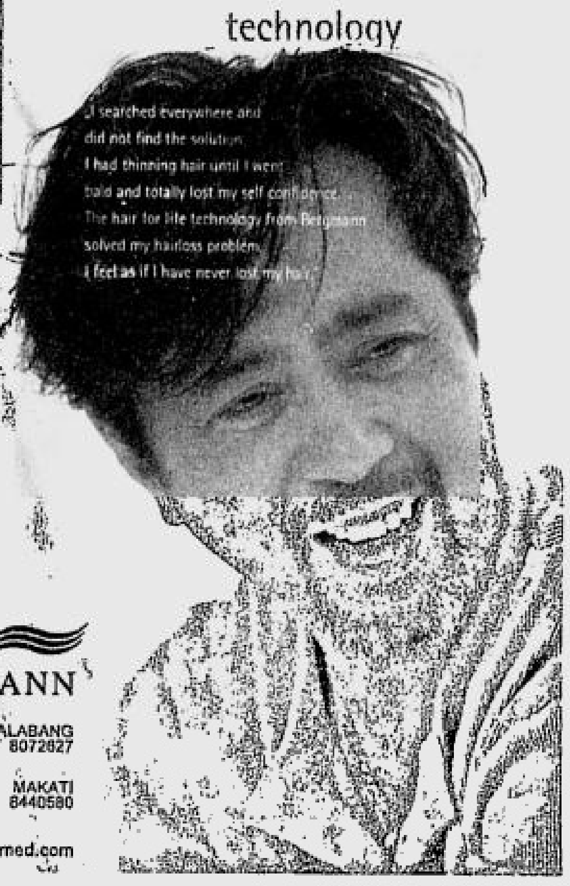

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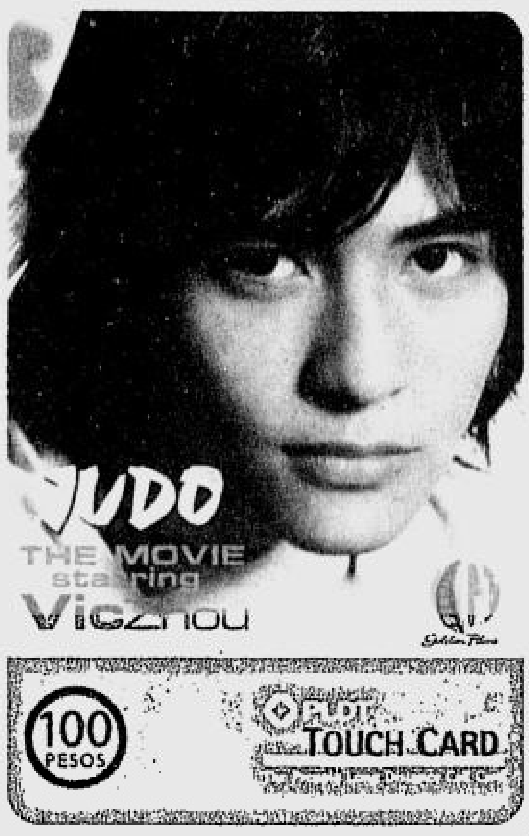

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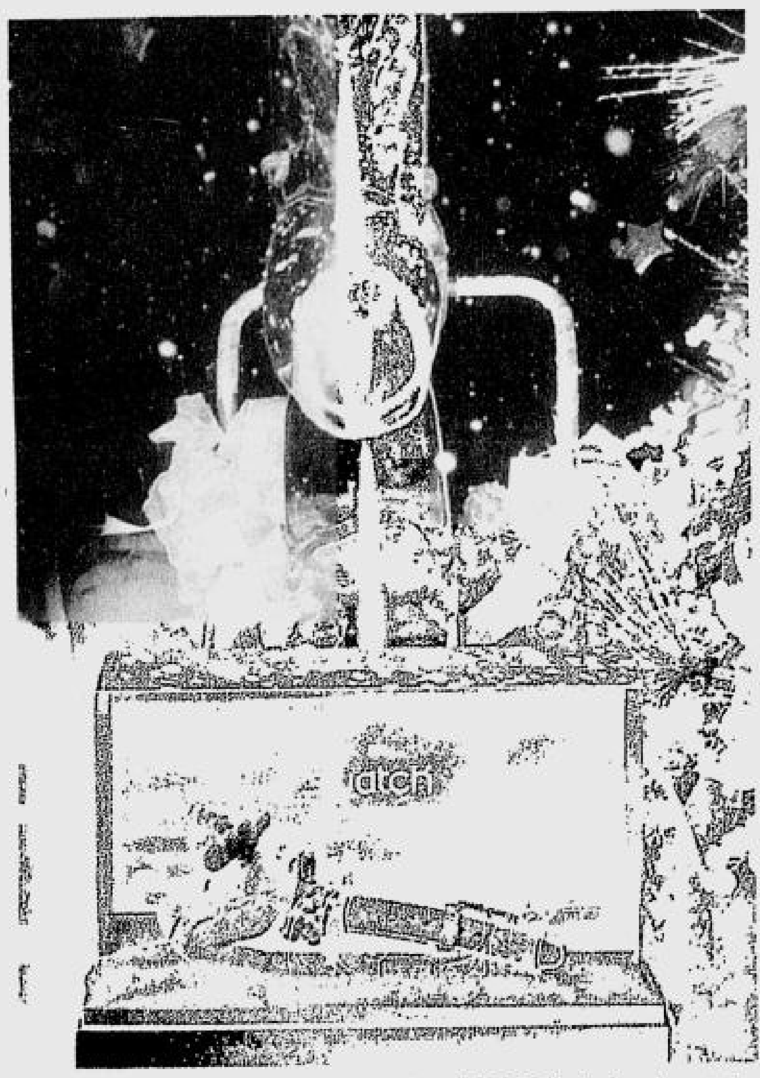

LAST CALL. The Swatch Christmas Special 2003 Jingle Jangle watch is up for raffle on Dec. 24, 12 noon at the Swatch Store in Glorietta 4.

STARMONY by Swatch Bijoux is the perfect backdrop for star director Rowell Santiago.

BELL RINGERS Tweetie de Leon Gonzales and Annette Coronel

Jingle jangle white

From page F1

ers Martin Nievera, Rachel Alejandro and Dawn Zulueta Lagdameo; sisters Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski and China Cojuangco; models Apples Aberrin-Sadwahni, Tweetie de Leon Gonzales, Annette Coronel, Joyce Orena, Rissa Samson and Raya Mananquil, among others.

First, the guests mingled inside the Swatch store where a ritzy black leather Furnitalia couch and coffee table had been set up. Then they were asked to pick a bag each from underneath the huge Christmas tree trimmed in white and silver. Each bag contained a Gift Gate tree ornament that could be worn around the neck.

Before the feast, Mikee and Tessa welcomed everyone with a screening of snapshots of the guests at previous Gift Gate events.

White doesn't quite go with the messy pleasures of eating but in this case the stark white table setting, the arrangements of white daisies and the white wine were just perfect. To each guest was assigned a waiter who served each course of the excellent menu from Margarita Fores' kitchen.

The parade of food started with Smoked Trout and Salmon Duet (with potato rosti and horseradish cream). Instead of getting the seafood appetizer, however, Westin Philipine Plaza's Rose Libongco, Lifestyle columnist Maurice Arcache and Wish boutique's Mia Borromeo were each served "Flaky," a Swatch watch featuring playful snowmen.

Lunch progressed with Gruyere Risotto Cake topped with air dried beef and watercress pesto. In place of the risotto cakes, Agot Isidro-Sandejas and Apples Aberin-Sadhwani won a Swatch Bijoux Lustro necklace each.

Up next was Roast Beef Tenderloin with Swiss cream-black truffle sauce grilled green and white asparagus spears. On his plate, Philippine Tatler editor and Lifestyle columnist Anton San Diego got no roast but a delightful surprise, a Christmas tree glass piece by Impy Pilapil. Not to worry, he later had a serving of the superlative entree.

The dessert of Alpine Monte Bianco with chestnut mousse and Valrhona lava capped the holiday feast.

Swatch watching

Between courses, as guests tried their hands at decorating gingerbread Christmas

JINGLE/ F3

ALL is calm, or should we say Calma for Suzy and Ed?

BABES IN WONDERLAND. Kiddie guests admire the huge Christmas tree decorated all in white by Tami Leung

DAWN Zulueta admiring the Jingle Jangle limited edition Swatch watch with detachable reindeer

AND the winner is... Anton San Diego shows off his glass tree trophy by Impy Pilapil.

'FUJIHAN' moment for the kids with someone mega-famous like Martin.

BEA Zobel Jr. points at a poster of her Swatch turnover to host Tessa Prieto Valdes.

Merry Christmas

Jingle jangle . . .

From page F2

trees from—could you be any classier?—Mandarin Oriental, Swatch let it snow, let it snow, let it snow with prizes for guests who were wearing very specific Swatches.

Bea Zobel Jr. got a reward for wearing the most coordinated get-up; on her wrist was a black-and-white Swatch Turnover, which matched her white top and black trousers. Photographer Raymund Isaac and Star Life editor Millet Mananquil won for being owners of vintage Swatch watches. Tessa and Rissa got prizes for wearing the same watch model, the Dreamlights Swatch. And Suzy won for wearing the newest Swatch, the Corso Como Skin.

The plum prize, the Jingle Jangle Swatch special 2003 Christmas watch, went to lucky Tweetie.

All in all, it was a fabulous launch for two equally fabulous limited edition Swatch products. Since only five Swatch Bijoux Starmony and 10 Swatch Jingle Jangle watches will be made available in the local market, they will be raffled off by Gift Gate to people who buy Swatch during the holiday promo period.

Every P500 purchase of a Swatch watch, Swatch Bijoux or Flik Flak watch at any participating store entitles one to a raffle coupon. The raffle draw is on Dec. 24 at the Swatch Store in Glorietta 4, Makati City.

Additional prizes include 5 Swatch Christmas Trees, 5 Mysterious Flik Flak watches and 5 Perle en Folie Flik Flak watches.

What Virgie Ramos will think of doing next Christmas is anybody's guess but, for sure, it will be something merry and bright.— CBF

MIA BORROMEO tries to convince Tessa that she has the winning watch to the amusement of seatmate Anna Buenaventura. Inset at left: An even more amused Monique Villonco

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How tea became cool

Credit goes to American Richard Blechynden, a merchant and tea plantation owner. In the 1904 St. Louis Fair, he dumped ice over brewed tea which instantly became a hit.

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6. The Gentxt-Informatics Promo shall run from December 5, 2003 to February 29, 2004. See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit no. 5142 Series of 2003

MANILA

Dec 20 & 22 **Backburner featuring DJ Ricky Stone**
9pm
DJ Ricky Stone returns to Manila for more Gentxt-approved musical mayhem.
Dec 20 (Sat): Basement, Eastwood
Dec 22 (Mon): Altitude Bar, Tomas Morato
*First 100 Gentxters to flash their Gentxt card or E-card (SMS from 2277), Globe Handyphone and a valid I.D. at the venue get free entrance.

Dec 20 Sat **DE-ICE @ Fort Bonifacio Global City**
8pm
Featuring Paolo Santos, Rivermaya, Jay R, Noel Cabangon, Sugar Free and Razorback
*First 200 Gentxters to flash their Gentxt card or E-card (SMS from 2277), Globe Handyphone and a valid ID get free entrance.

Jan 1 Thur **Dream @ 6750's Retro Revelry**
1 - 8am
A special edition of DecaDance with Boyet Almazan
*One free drink for the first 100 Gentxters

GENERAL SANTOS

Dec 20 Sat **Rave Nation**
9pm
The ReMake @ The Party Organizer, Santiago Boulevard featuring DJ Jojie Cayco and the fashion collections of Davao's young designers.
*First 50 Gentxters to flash their Gentxt card or E-card (SMS from 2277), Globe Handyphone and a valid I.D. at the venue get a free drink each.

DAVAO

Dec 27 Sat **Post Christmas Party @ The Promenade**
8pm
'Tis the season to party in the streets with Gentxt!
*Gentxters get 20% off on drinks at 183 Bar & Cafe.

BORACAY

Dec 24 & 31 **Summerplace**
Dec 24: Supernatural Christmas 2003 featuring Carlotta Ensemble and DJ Jaco
Dec 31: Natural Mystic New Year 2004 featuring Indio I, Carlotta Ensemble, Cocoy Puyat, Bo Razon and Roberto Sanchez
*One free drink to Gentxters from 10pm-12mn

Dec 26 - Jan 4 **Holiday Nights @ Pier One Beachcomber**
8pm
Dec 26 & 27: Session Road
Dec 28: Pido with Take One
Dec 29: Pido with Take One & Velcro
Dec 30: Rage & Hourglass
Dec 31: Rage & Velcro
Jan 1: Hourglass & Velcro
Jan 2 & 3: Jay R
Jan 4: Indio I
*One free drink for Gentxters!

Dec 27 - Jan 1 **Cocomangas Shooter Bar**
Dec 27: Hip Hop Holidays featuring DJ Reebok
Dec 28: Don't Stop the Beat House Music featuring DJ Reebok
Dec 29: Shake Your Booty Hip Hop Party featuring DJ Reebok
Dec 31: Halo Halo Hot Legs House Party featuring DJ Reebok
Jan 1: Recovery House Party featuring DJ Kevin Ruiz
*10% off on all drinks for Gentxters

Dec 31 & Jan 2 & 3 **Go South @ Club Paraiso**
Celebrate the season at Boracay's newest hotspot!
Dec 31: New Year's Eve Ball featuring DJs Ricky Stone, Mike Tolentino, Owen and Val Quimbaco
Jan 2: Black Out Friday featuring DJ Elmer Dado
Jan 3: Saturday Night Fever Retro Dance Event featuring DJ James McRaine
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Sunday LifeStyle

Maria
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SEEDS
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MARIA A. RESSA

> Is Megawati Sukarno an intelligent interview? Do you wanna get me in trouble? (Laughter)

Maria Ressa, reporting live . . .

PLAYTIME

By the Staff

QUIZ question: If Maria Ressa had not become the most visible Filipino face on CNN, what would she have become: a) musician; b) microbiologist; d) medical doctor; b) theater artist; or e) all of the above?

The answer is all of the above. At a very young age Ressa, a Fil-Am whose father belongs to the musical Aycardo-Sunico clan (an uncle is UST music dean Raul Sunico), learned to play the piano, violin, viola, cello, flute and guitar.

Perhaps because music shares features with science and mathematics, she took up a pre-med course at Princeton, where she worked on a microbiological project with one of the scientists involved in the Science of Life genetics project.

But she abandoned the sciences and shifted to English, which she finished with honors. She would have become a playwright and stage director had she not received a Fulbright scholarship to take up graduate studies at the University of the Philippines.

In the Philippines, she met Cheche Lazaro and became part of "The Probe Team," which started the broadcast investigative revolution in Philippine journalism. CNN took notice of Ressa's high-quality work and got her to head its Manila bureau.

Today, Ressa is CNN bureau chief in Jakarta, where she has covered some of the most seminal regional events in the last eight years. Those events revolve around the rise of the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia as launching pads for terrorist attacks against the West and the rest of the world by extremist Islamic groups such as the al-Qaida and Jemaah Islamiyah.

Ressa's deep and incisive journalism is evident in "Seeds of Terror," subtitled "An Eyewitness Account of al-Qaida's Newest Center of Operations in Southeast Asia." Published by Free Press, a division of Simon & Schuster, the book is the most convincing proof yet of the threat of terrorism and how Southeast Asian countries like the Philippines, because of their porous borders, divisive politics, ethnic diversity, intractable poverty and even rugged democracy have been exploited by extremists to spread the terrorist conflagration.

Here in Manila to launch the book, and forced to spend Christmas here because of pneumonia ("Manila is home to me, and I love spending Christmas here"), Ressa talked to the Playtime staff about how she wished the book to cause a policy shift in Washington, away from the arrogant bellicosity of the Bush administration toward an enlightened approach to terrorism.

She insisted the threat exists and should be met head on but with appreciation of the realities in Southeast Asia.

As she is a Filipino who has gently but firmly crossed swords with CNN bosses over the American network's West-centered coverage of Asia, Ressa knows whereof she speaks. And if the presence of American Ambassador Francis Ricciardone in the book launching at PowerBooks Greenbelt 4 was any indication, her book might get a fair hearing in Washington.

It's a surprise that you were able to finish a book despite your busy schedule as bureau chief. So how long did it take you to write the book?

The research for it really began right after 9/11. You know how you live through events in your life, but when something happens it changes the way you look at everything. So I went back and relooked at all these things ... the bombing of the Philippine ambassador's palace, all the conflict that had happened in Indonesia, the wars between the Muslims and the Christians in Ambon and Kosovo... the bombings in the Philippines, the LRT bombings [and I thought] my gosh, I've been investigating al-Qaida all along!

Three months I was in India, and I was in Kashmir, and I was looking at the links between al-Qaida and the militant groups. One of them was a group called Harkat-ul-Unsar, which was actually linked to the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front).

I had built up about 700-800 different intelligence documents from different countries. I had them in the room, and I said I couldn't just throw them away, so I decided to take time and just try to write the book. I gave myself a deadline—30 pages a week every Sunday. If I don't hit it, I don't sleep.

You didn't take time off to do the book?

I was insane! I did take a full month off and I spent all of it in my apartment. My friends became tired of al-Qaida. (Laughter) Nobody liked to hear me talk about al-Qaida anymore.

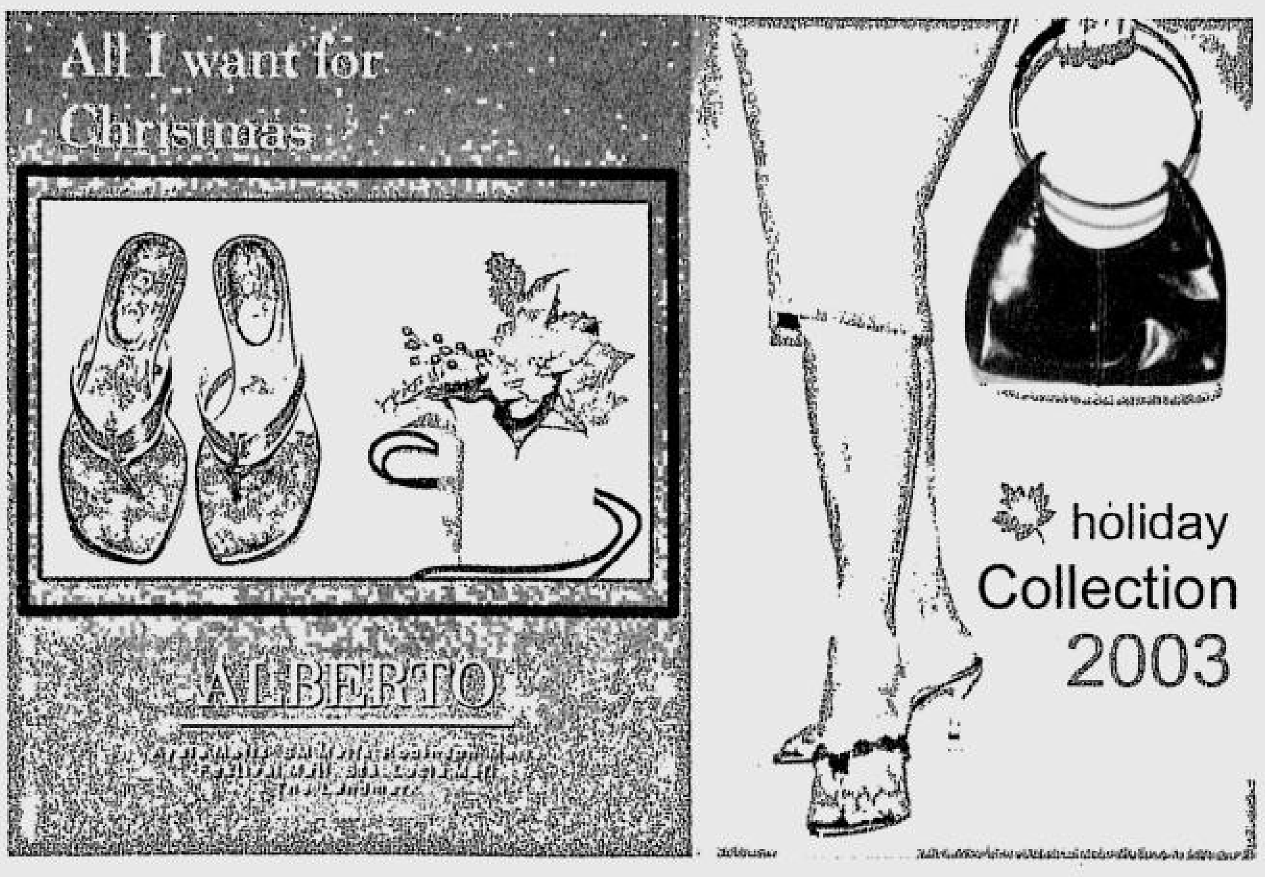
Even before 9/11 you already had contacts with al-Qaida?

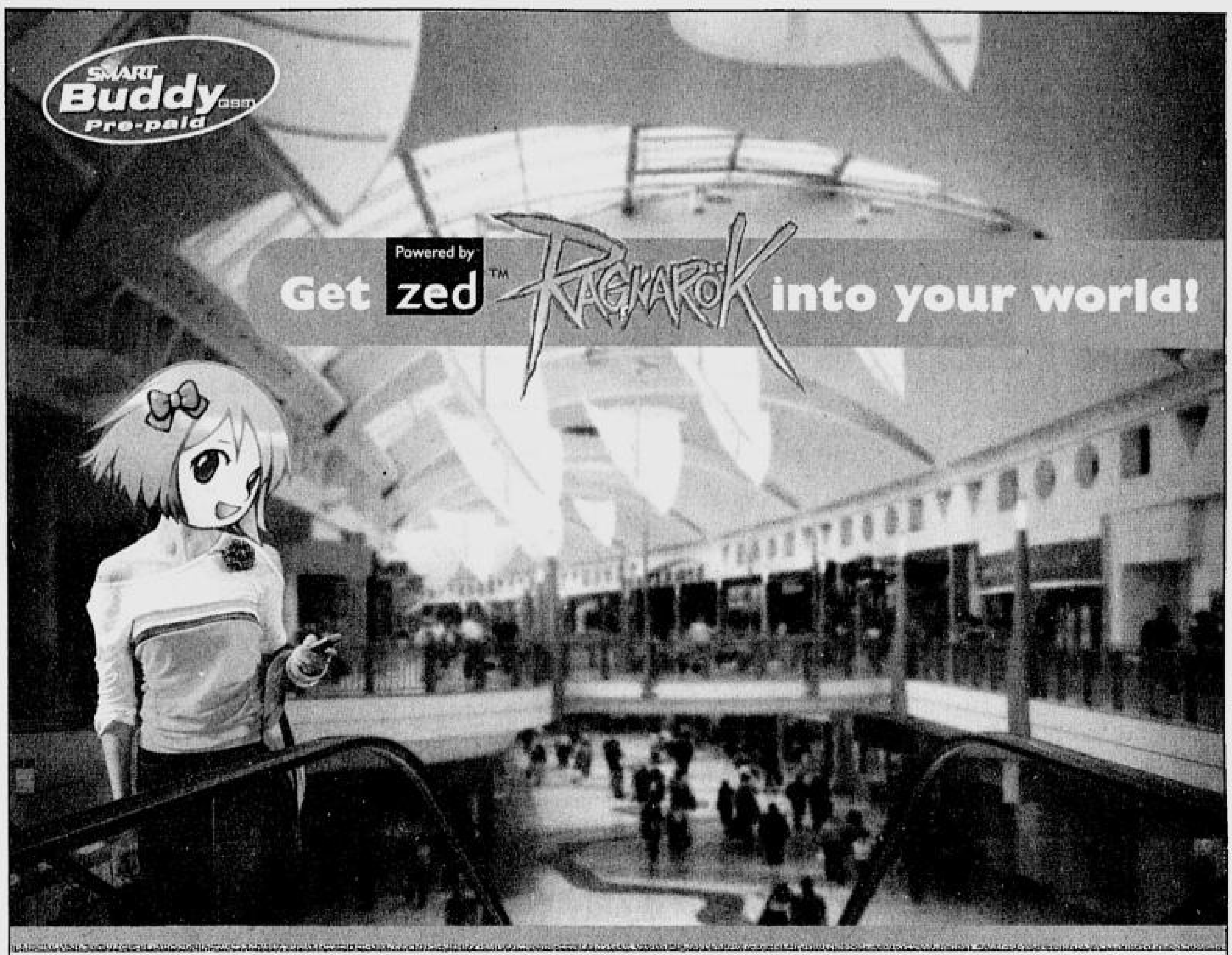
We didn't call it al-Qaida then. We called it MILF... I mean, we called it different things. I think that was the genius of the way the the Jemaah Islamiyah and al-Qaida work in Southeast Asia. It was only in 1988-1995 they sent Arab operatives there, right? These Arab operatives were arrested after that freak apartment fire in 1995. *(The fire at Josefina's Apartments in Malate, Manila that exposed the explosives being produced by the terrorists in their plot to assassinate Pope John Paul II who was in Manila then for the World Youth Day.—Ed.)*

In Malate?

Yeah. He was the first pilot that was recruited for a suicide mission. A guy named Waji Khan Amin Shah, who fought with Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan. And then the last man, it led to his arrest. Ramzi Yousef [the Josefina Apart-

MARIA/ G2





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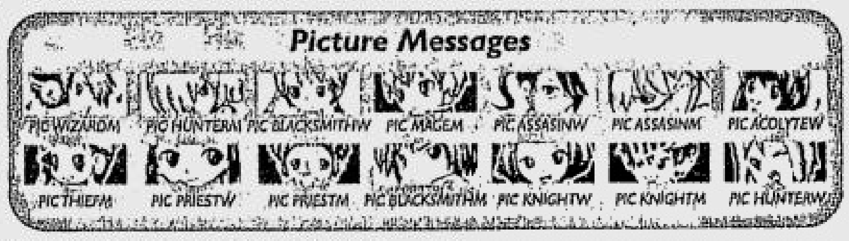

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Theme of Geffen	MTONE GEFFEN	TONE GEFFEN
Theme of Lutie	MTONE LUTIE	TONE LUTIE
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Maria Ressa, reporting live . . .

From page G1

'Working with CNN has been the most amazing thing. It's a front seat to history. If you name any event in Southeast Asia in the last 10 years, I was there'

ments terrorist] actually escaped from the Philippines, but they arrested him in Pakistan.

So you can see the strategy of the way the al-Qaida works. Initially, bin Laden sent his people to the Philippines. When the 1995 cell was busted, they shifted strategy. They decided to co-opt the existing groups that were already there—Filipinos, Indonesians and Malaysians. They meld in better and know the culture. What they did was spread the ideology. And that is far, far more powerful than the initial attempt.

Wise *sila*, they started to use their ideology.

The first nuggets came from India and Kashmir during their conflict over Kashmir. And there was a guy named Omar Sheikh, whom I was tracking down. In 1999, I covered the hijacking of the Indian Airlines, and, in exchange for the lives of the passengers they released, India agreed to release three Islamic militants from their prison. One of those militants was a guy named Omar Sheikh.

Omar Sheikh was the guy who killed Daniel Pearl. Omar Sheikh was also a member of al-Qaida. I was tracking him down November. Daniel Pearl was killed December, right? In November, I was in India trying to track him down.

Another guy who was released with him in 1999 was Maulana Masood Azhar. He was an Indian cleric, the spiritual leader of the group that was initially Harkat-ul-Unsar. Banned by the US, they changed their name to Harkat-ul-Mujahideen. When he was released, he changed the name of the group to Jaish-e-Mohammed. It is the group that was behind the attack on the Indian parliament in December of 2001.

I remember this, and it was weird because they took a plane to Kandahar, to Afghanistan! So that was the first time I was really looking at it. And then I found out that Jaish-e-Mohammed had an organization that was linked to the MILF!

I started looking at the strands and they kept creating the same picture. So you add little pieces of the puzzle and you get the whole picture.

So considering the—how would you call it ?—"acculturation of Arab terrorism in Southeast Asia"—has Southeast Asia become a less safe place? Or have things worsened?

I'm not even so sure if things have worsened. It's always been there. Every single major al-Qaida terrorist attack has had some links to the Philippines. Remember the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that were bombed? The planning for those was done in Davao, by a guy named Mohamed Sadeek Odeh. And he actually came from the Philippines to Kenya to do the site surveillance of the US embassy. This I found out parts... bits and pieces of it from the court testimony of Mohammed Sadeek Odeh and Wadih al-Hage.

So we don't pay attention to it. It's below the radar screen but it's there. What I just did in the book is, I said, it's here! And actually the Philippines was the first place the al-Qaida went to in Southeast Asia. From the Philippines they spread their financial network to Malaysia, and then from there, when Jakarta fell in 1998, in Indonesia. Indonesia was just a playground.

So why do you think they started in the Philippines? What made us fertile ground for their plans?

In 1988, which was when Osama bin Laden sent his brother-in-law here, we were two years out of a dictatorship. Two years after People Power. And there are many similarities between Indonesia and the Philippines. Some of the similarities have to deal with what happens in a dictatorship. In many ways [the end of dictatorship] opens a Pandora's box.

In 1988, I think the Philippines was vulnerable because we were a very open society. Democracy was what we championed. But, in many ways, countries that have been most vulnerable to al-Qaida have been democratic ones. Because it allows them the democratic space to spread a radical ideology.

How would you rate the danger of terrorism in the Philippines? From one-10.

Seven or eight.

It's that high?

Yeah. The Indonesian authorities have discovered that the JI plans three stages of attacks between December and April. And we know from Hambali's interrogation that al-Qaida's fund is more than $140,000 through him. He had sent that money into Southeast Asia. Every time there's been an attack in Indonesia, there'd be corresponding attacks in the Philippines, so we have to watch in the coming months.

Peace talks with the MILF are supposed to begin. I truly hope they are coming to the table with the best-efforts approach, a sincere approach. Despite the fact that they deny any link, intelligence documents and their actions have shown concrete link to terrorism. They use terrorism as a way to get what they want.

Inevitably, if we follow the trend with the way the MILF works, whenever they take military setbacks, whenever they pull back, that's when terrorism happens. So for me, it's not that I don't think peace talks should begin. It's that I think they should be held accountable. And you know if you're gonna talk with somebody on the table, like you guys are gonna report something for INQUIRER, you gotta make sure that they can speak for everybody.

It comes down to that: You control the people whom you speak for. And if you can't, then you have a problem in your organization and we're gonna have to find a way to deal with that.

I sound like a rightist. I'm really not. For me I believe that we have to address the problems coherently and holistically. And much as I am an optimist, I don't want to be stupid.

Why do you think it was the MILF that the al-Qaida allied with, not the MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front)?

Because of the ideology. In the timeline of the book, you'll see that Hashim Salamat started sending Filipino fighters to Afghanistan in 1980. And he actually had an office in Pakistan at that time. The MNLF, I think, is much more like the NPA (New People's Army) in a sense that they're fighting for economic parity. The MILF has never acknowledged the Philippine government... and the goal of the MILF and Hashim Salamat has always been to topple the government and set up an Islamic state.

Is there a particular time of the year that the problem is worse?

If you look historically over the last couple of years, it's actually in the latter half of the year. I'm not sure why. It could be that the planning begins in the beginning of the year and they execute it at the tail-end. It could be that they take advantage of the holiday season.

Talking about politics and accusations, how would you react to criticisms that your book would fall into the propaganda trap of the war on terrorism of President George W. Bush?

But I criticize him a lot. If you read Chapter 10, it's called "American Missteps." I'm Filipino, I'm American... so for me it's not about nationality... Let's just call a spade a spade.

Part of the problem with the Americans' thinking and the way they've acted in the war on terrorism is that they've been extremely arrogant and [taken] a unilateral position. It's the criticism of the Muslim world, and it's the feeling of the rest of the world. (Laughs) From the time it took office, the Bush administration has turned its back on international cooperation. If they had waited a little longer for UN approval, it would've helped a lot. Certainly what it did was drive a wedge between the West and the Muslim world.

America is the world's only superpower now. But if we look at it historically again, every time there's been one power, the rest of the world gangs up on that power. The reason that hasn't happened to the United States is that it has taken a very strong multilateral position after World War II. There was the Marshall Plan and [Bretton Woods]. [The US operated on] a certain mode of generosity. And I think, if they live according to their ideas instead of being hypocritical, it works a far longer way.

In the end, we need the United States in the war on terrorism. As much as the US needs the rest of the world. That's one of the reasons I wrote the book.

How has the reaction been in the US to your book?

Positive. I think because, I guess, it's changed what people knew!

And then they start to understand...

I'll show you that anti-American sentiment has increased around the region. What does that mean? When it increases, that means the recruitment for radical Islam actually increases. I don't think that's how Americans deal with other nations—unlike in the Philippines.

(Reads from her book) "Of the many US officials that I met at the time, only two could understand and speak the native language, cutting off access and understanding to a majority of the Filipinos. Perhaps because I'm Filipino-American what bothered me most was a condescending attitude that prevailed among embassy officials. Many were midlevel bureaucrats... blah blah blah blah blah..." (Laughter) I hope they don't hate me. (Laughter) Often Americans are hated because they show a disregard of others' ways of life and a deep-seated disrespect of other cultures. That's the main thing that Americans need to get over.

I have heard complaints from Filipinos who work in foreign news agencies. One major complaint is that their stories, especially those filed to New York, get changed. The perspective becomes more American. So these people in New York edit the stories and use a completely different interpretation. Do you have that kind of problem in CNN?

I now have enough seniority in CNN to say no. The example was Mahathir Mohamad's speech. Remember the speech at the the Organization of the Islamic Conference where they accused him of being anti-Semitic because [he said the] Jews ruled the world by proxy. The way I did that story was to show that Mahathir basically was talking to a roomful of Muslim leaders and he was trying to get them to denounce violence. He basically said the Palestinian suicide bombers are as bad as the terrorists—that Muslim leaders were doing the wrong thing by condoning violence.

So I did the story that way and then I also used the soundbites that said Jews ruled the world by proxy, but at the bottom. Because the way I did it, it's look, this is the news out of this Muslim conference. And, yes, in order to get the Arab and Muslim leaders to take his message, Mahathir made it more palatable by attacking a common enemy, because he had to prove his Muslim credentials.

So we aired the story at 7 p.m. and at midnight I got a call from Atlanta saying, "No, we want you to do the story again because we want to run it for our primetime shows. But we need to start it with an anti-Semitic stand." And I said, "I can't. One, anti-Semitism in the way the US has it doesn't exist in Southeast Asia, and two, that's not the point of the man who gave the speech!"

And you know, frankly, it was the second day of a three-day conference. I could not say to the leaders of the Muslim world, you know... that's the case that I took! So we debated about it till 6 a.m. And in the end, they had Wolfe Blitzer do the story out of Washington DC. I think if they decide to angle the story, then they have to have it written by somebody who believes it! *Hindi ba*? (Laughs)

The dateline is Washington, the proxy capital of the Jews. (Laughter)

And they found a Jewish-American organization that went on-cam to comment on it.

When you say you were tracking down certain people, how dangerous was that?

In one sense, Filipinos were lucky. Our democracy wasn't as violent as it was in Indonesia. The fall of Suharto was preceded by the death of 1,400 people in these riots in Jakarta.

The level of violence in Indonesia was extremely high. Ambon in Indonesia... I think it's a place where al-Qaida succeeded. More than 10,000 people killed in wars between Muslims and Christians over three years.

And to get around them, we take all the CNN signs off any of our equipment. And my crew is Pinoy, *ha*? I've a Pinoy and Indonesian team, so we're good. We've the protection of coloration. (Laughter) But if I walked into a mosque and I said my name was Maria, these men would start to attack me, because I'm a Christian.

So there's basically that conflict that was fueled by al-Qaida. And it killed 10,000 people. How many headlines were there about it? Not a lot. And to me, that was one of the most traumatic things.

Another one was in West Kalimantan, where in a week eight people were beheaded. And after a week and a half there, I flew to the States because I had to get my head on straight. (Laughs) I just had to get out...

Who are the people? Why are they doing this? Mostly it's revenge. But as it turns out, that conflict was also used by al-Qaida. So how do you reason out?

I really followed everything, and it began to make sense! You know things that seemed like such senseless violence, I realized it was because it was fueled. In Ambon, as soon as the violence subsided, Muslim fighters from Jemaah Islamiyah and al-Qaida would come in and attack a Christian village. They got to the point where Christian cleansing happened!

But nobody reported it like that at the time. Because we didn't believe that. I look at everything differently now.

They're really acting as agitators.

And I think they're still doing it in Kosovo right now. In October, violence happened there again. Finally, now, the Indonesian police is starting to call a spade a spade. They're starting to say, We believe Jemaah Islamiyah is behind this.

Do you get death threats?

Yes. But the best ones are text messages. (Laughs) CNN sent security guys to look at our security situation. Again it's being smart about it, but not being paranoid. Because the minute you become paranoid you're not effective. Then I think of myself as very small. So if it's really al-Qaida, why would they waste resources on someone very small. I mean, there are far bigger targets.

But they say the pen is a powerful tool.

I hope so. But al-Qaida have extremely good propaganda people. Far better than the West has. That's why they're winning the propaganda war. And you know that since they do it in Arabic, the Muslim world reads it, the US doesn't!

The conflict exposes America's ignorance and arrogance.

But that's part of it. I claim in the book that I am an optimist because you also can't get around the fact that America has a lot of power. It's an economic, political and military power. If you can get Americans engaged, truly engaged, in conflict that it can help resolve, that can only be good. And as soon as America sees that it's an act of enlightened self-interest to help resolve these conflicts, then I think we can have a better world. That's my most optimistic scenario. (Laughter)

Are you tempted to change your name whenever you're in Indonesia? Ressa sounds Arabic.

I just don't introduce myself and I speak Indonesian.

Where is your base?

It's a very hard question. (Laughter) I average about 80 days in my base in Jakarta. And this year, because my lease was up, at some point I was living in hotels. I'm trying very hard to move to the Philippines. I wanna come back.

What is your citizenship?

I'm Filipino-American. I carry two passports. The problem with the Filipino passport is, if you travel a lot, you need visas! It's incredible! But if you wanna go to Afghanistan, or if you wanna go to Cuba... (Laughter)

All of a sudden it's good to be Filipino. (Laughter)

I just figured, you know, I can be part of both worlds. Why not?

How did you become the Jakarta bureau chief?

I was running Manila since 1988, and in 1994 my boss just basically said, "We wanna move you to Indonesia. Start working on getting a permit." And at that point, Indonesia hadn't admitted any American broadcaster yet. And it took me seven months of negotiations with Indonesia. And it helped that I was Filipino.

Again, in almost every part of my job, it has helped that I've been Filipino. And it's been a strong point. Except maybe in Tokyo. They expected a white guy. (Laughs) And I was not white nor was I a guy! (Laughter)

How has it been working for CNN?

It's been the most amazing thing. Because it's a front seat to history. If you name any event in Southeast Asia in the last 10 years, I was there. I could feel it.

How was it like interviewing Mahathir?

Loved it.

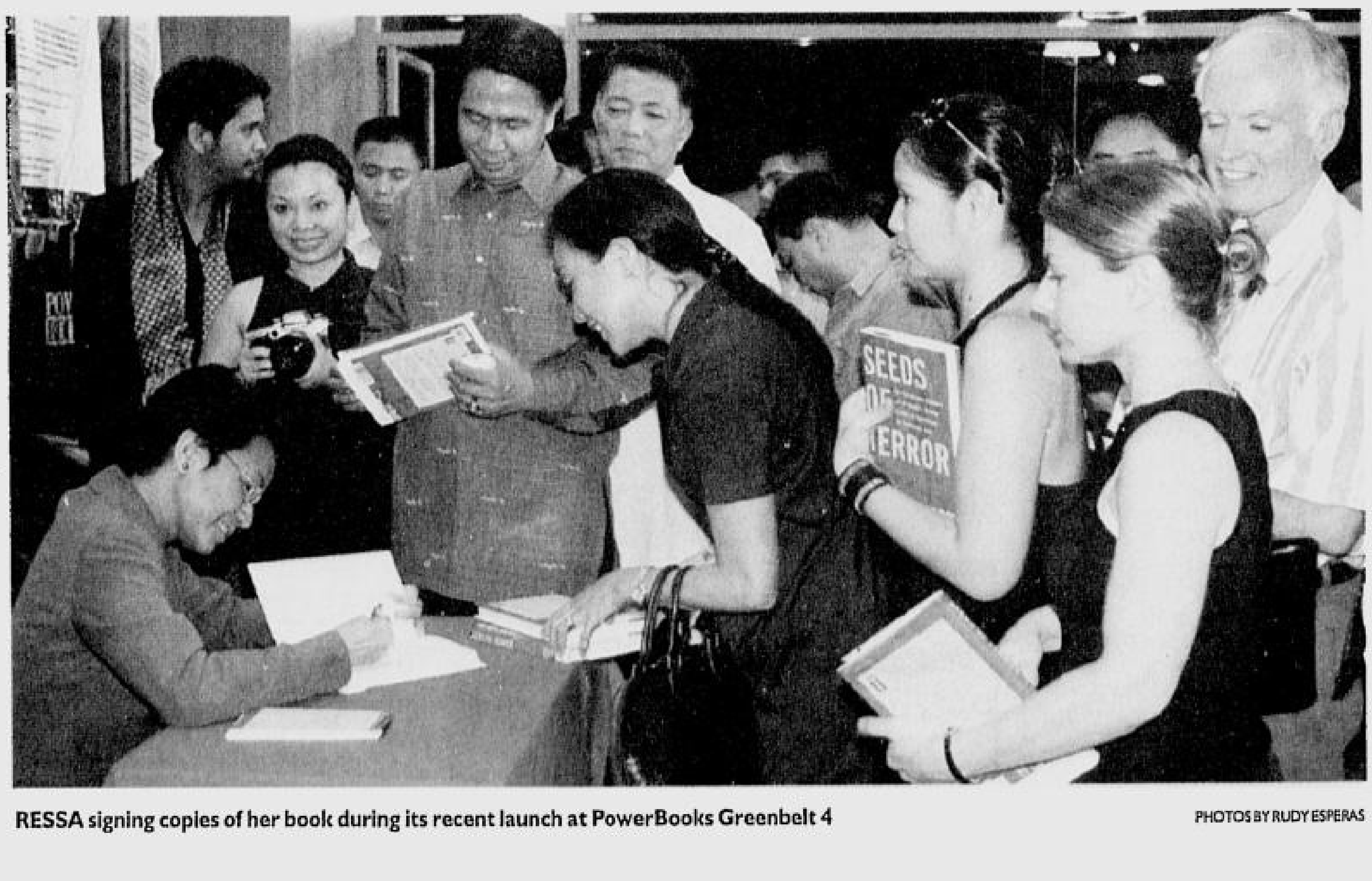
Is it a crutch being a Filipino-American?

No, it was a cross being CNN. (Laughter) I realized they have a deep distrust of the American media. Part of the reason is because he's been burned.

I also think sometimes Western press doesn't understand our country. They impose. This is why I wanted to join CNN because at the beginning I was thinking they're making fun of our country and they didn't understand it. In 1986, for example, a lot of the guys would do their story in the bars!

How do you feel about the

MARIA/ G4



RESSA signing copies of her book during its recent launch at PowerBooks Greenbelt 4

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Maria Ressa, reporting live . . .

From page G2

perception that, during the runup to the war in Iraq, CNN was pandering to the American audience?

You can read what I really think of Iraq in the book, it's in Chapter 10. Let's not make it CNN, let's say American journalists. Americans had never felt under attack the way they did after 9/11. So I had never seen before the wave of patriotism that filled the American press until 9/11 happened.

All of us who've worked overseas have seen it somewhere, but it's never to that degree. But maybe it's because we're not a superpower that has just had the World Trade Center crushed. I mean, 10,000 people died in Ormoc, *'di ba*? We've lived through a lot of these things.

Having said that, 9/11 targeted Americans, and the way American journalism reacted was to [wave the flag]. Fox News, for example. See, I could say Fox News because they had a flag on the screen!

Fox News would be the Jingle Express… (Laughter)

I wouldn't even say Jingle Express. It's just that all of a sudden being American was a factor in being a journalist when it shouldn't!

Yes, yes…

I think that, in many ways, the Pentagon, in embedding the reporters, got exactly what they wanted… But I think American journalists are getting better at it if you look at post-Iraq. The analysis is kicking back into shape.

Do you find that the Americans would rather do something on Indonesia than the Philippines?

> 'In the end we need the United States in the war on terrorism as much as the US needs the rest of the world'

Oh, that's an interesting question. I think partly because the Philippines is so deceptively American, they think they know it really well. And Indonesia is about as far from the West as they can get in Southeast Asia.

Yes, I find that there's been much more interest in Indonesia, but I don't know if it's because Indonesia has 220 million people versus the 80 million people of the Philippines.

And they're Muslims.

They're the world's largest Muslim population. So there are several reasons. I think that the Philippines also has been extremely disjointed. We're consistent in our foreign policy in most ways, but we don't exert our power and clout enough, I think.

We don't have clout.

I don't agree that we don't have it. It's just I think we have enough if we choose where to exert it. But we rarely choose to. Except for kicking out the bases. (Laughs) It was more in the negative, wasn't it? I hope it's changing.

Where were you during 9/11?

In Jakarta, on a treadmill. (Laughter) I was in the gym and all of a sudden, when I saw this, I really thought, I knew I remembered it. And even right after the second plane hit, I called Atlanta and I said, "You have to send me to the Philippines because this was a plot in the Philippines." The next day I was on a flight.

WITH US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone and National Book Store's Socorro Ramos

Where were you during the Bali bombing?

I was on a flight coming out of Hong Kong, and I flew straight into Bali. Yeah, I was coming from San Francisco to Hong Kong when it happened, and as soon as I got off they called me and I flew straight into Jakarta.

So that's the thing. They can tell you anytime…

Oh yeah. (Laughs) They can reroute you wherever you want, whenever they want. (Laughter) I don't know how people can do it when they're in town. They can't. That's why you have so many broken marriages.

So how much do they pay you?

Let me just put it this way: It's worth my while. (Laughter)

I get paid less than my American counterparts because I live in Southeast Asia. The cost of living is higher in the States. But it's something I fight with all the time. Actually I've learned how to negotiate.

Do you have an agent or manager?

I don't have one because I'm a reporter. I think if you negotiate really well, you wouldn't wanna walk away from it. And I've never wanted to.

If the book becomes a best seller, you'll be able to bargain better with CNN.

(Laughs) I'm not sure. CNN has invested a lot of money in Southeast Asia. They've kept me here since 1988, right?

Okay, lifestyle questions. Who is your family in Jakarta now?

I don't have a family in Jakarta.

Do you live alone?

Yes, I do. In Jakarta I had a roommate who was another photographer, and we basically went like story to story together…

That was a polite way of asking…

Am I married, am I single? (Laughs)

Are you attached? Just a follow-up question, do you have a dog? (Laughter)

No. (Laughter) I can't even have a dog. (Laughter) I can't even have a plant 'cause it dies. (Laughter)

How's the nightlife in Jakarta? (Laughter)

I'm the wrong person to ask. It used to be great in 1995. But then, since 1996, I have been doing riots. (Laughs)

That's the nightlife? So you now hang out with the rioters? (Laughter)

Here's an interesting thing about the Pinoy expat community in Jakarta. In 1995, they were primarily bankers, right? In 1999, they were primarily NGO workers, because the bankers pulled out after the Asian financial crisis.

What was your most unforgettable blooper?

I was doing live shots for, like, 18 hours straight. And at some point I was catatonic, and I was on camera, and when I was put on the air, instead of greeting the people, I said, "Hello, CNN." I thought it was like picking up the phone. And then I just started laughing. (Laughter) I couldn't stop. So I ducked. (Laughter) That was the worst thing. That was in 1998.

Who was your most unforgettable interview?

Many, it depends. Bill Clinton was amazing in terms of expansiveness and charisma. He never avoided a question, he was pretty much head-on. Mahathir I loved, for different reasons.

Did you do Suharto?

I did. I can't compare him to Erap, but it's that homegrown wisdom. He's more comfortable talking to farmers than bankers. And when he's talking to farmers, his language is folksy. I interviewed him after he stepped down, and he was defending his rule. He was very autocratic. (Bacharuddin Jusuf) Habibie is a fun interview.

How is he?

He's kind of like a madcap scientist. (Laughter)

How about Megawati Sukarnoputri? Is she an intelligent interview?

Do you wanna get me in trouble? (Laughter)

Is GMA a good interview?

She's a fantastic interview. She's smart.

Erap?

Yes. It depends on what time of the day you interview him. (Laughter)

Who's a better copy? GMA or Megawati?

GMA *siyempre*. (Laughs)

Wouldn't that put you in trouble with the Jakarta authorities?

Are you quoting me on that? (Laughter)… The reason why she's much more difficult to get to than Macapagal-Arroyo is she knows her weaknesses, and she guards against that.

What has been your most difficult subject so far?

The Asian financial crisis, my crash course in MBA. (Laughter) It was a phenomenal learning experience, and one of the things I realized is, it was as much about the lack of confidence of Southeast Asian nations as it was about the IMF's prescriptions. I was there when the IMF sent its deputy governor to revamp Indonesia's banks. And he knew nothing about Indonesia!

Who do you look up to among your colleagues?

For many different reasons, different people. Seth Mydans from New York Times is a phenomenal, lyrical writer. I think he captures the essence of certain things.

Cheche [Lazaro], in terms of ideals and the way she chooses the heart of the story. I remember chasing a streetkid around with her for two and a half weeks. She pours passion on the social side more than I do. (Pause.)

You're catching me at a bad time in television. Because there's always a tug-of-war between form and substance in television, right? And what I'm finding out is, a lot of times, form wins over substance. You guys are much better than we are. In many ways, print journalists have to be more disciplined. I'm at a point when I'm really reassessing.

Can we offer you a column? (Laughter)

I think CNN may not allow me.

We're serious.

Are you really?

Yes!

I'd love to, I'd love to!

Yeah, something light . . . about the riots… or Baghdad… (Laughter).

You guys are funny. (Laughs)

Osama bin Laden and his lifestyle. Who he's dating now. (Laughter)

Who are you dating, Maria? I don't think it's about me, it should be about the work I do.

But it's getting to know you, Maria. Your viewers are curious.

Let's just say I'm in a relationship, and I'm very happy. And so far, it's been okay. (Laughter) Despite my schedule. But beyond that, it's like I have all the same issues and questions you guys have, except the fact that my life is not my own. That's my only problem. And I have to start dealing with that soon. I turned 40 this year. (Laughs)

Ahhh. What month? When?

Oct. 2.

That's why you're Maria, the month of the Holy Rosary (Laughter). Don't tell the Muslims.

But, you know, if I can always focus the attention on the work, that's much, much better. First, I think our problem in the Philippines is we're so personality-oriented and so personality-centered that sometimes we don't demand enough. I go back to form vs substance. I'd rather give you my ideas, *hindi ba*? (Laughs)

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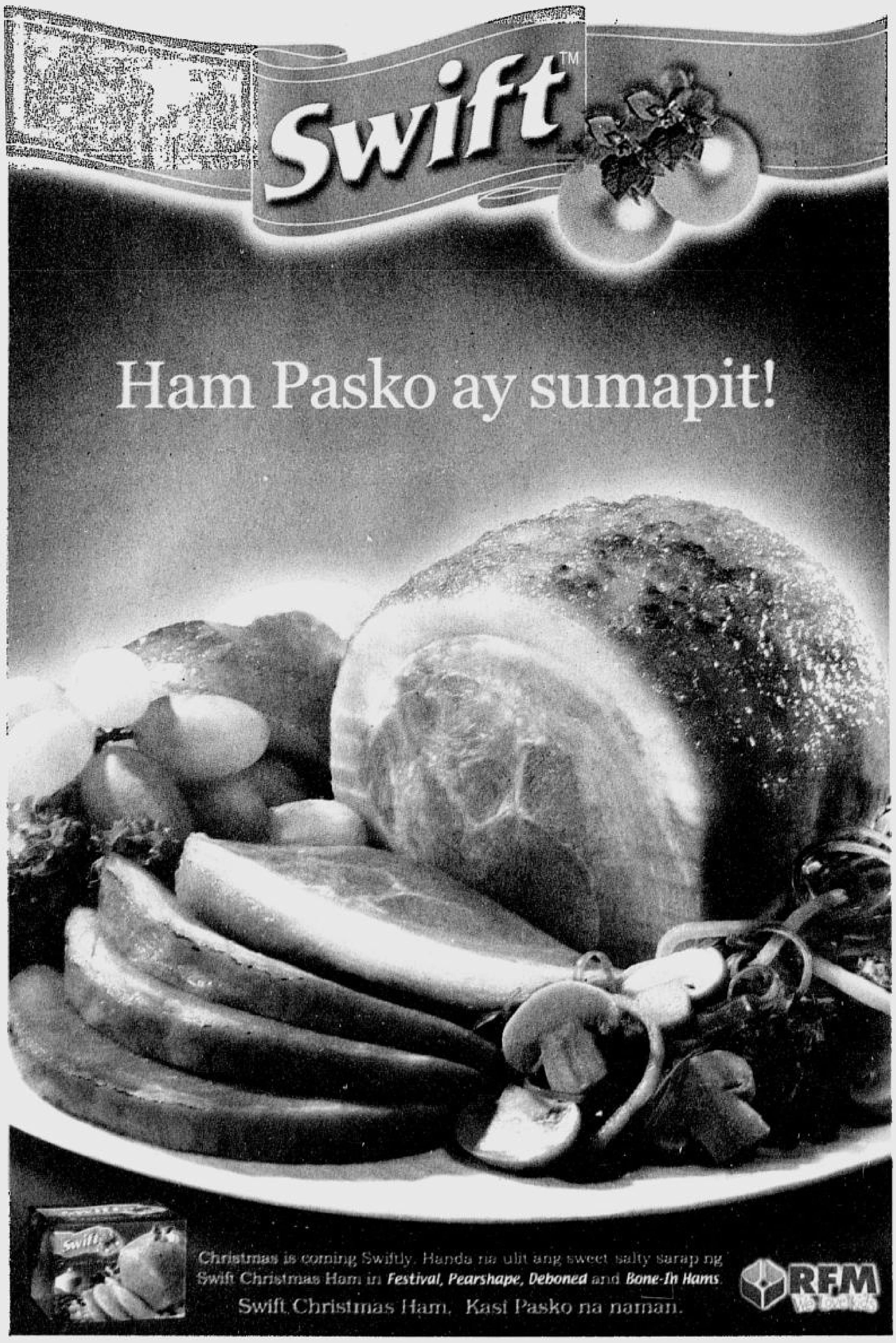

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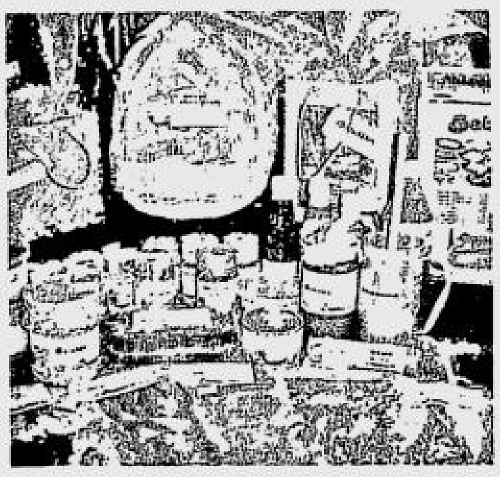

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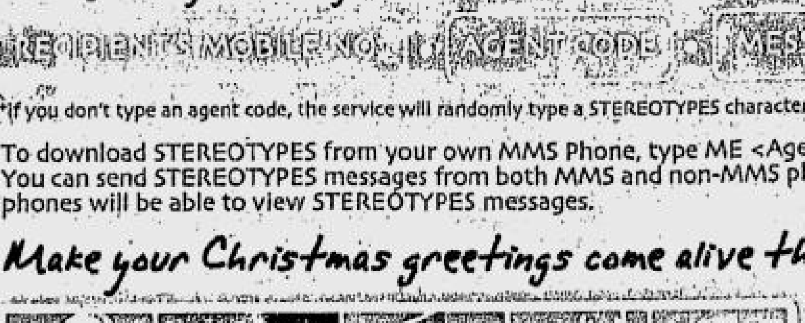
To download STEREOTYPES from your own MMS Phone, type ME <AgentCode> <Message> and send to 366. You can send STEREOTYPES messages from both MMS and non-MMS phones. But only subscribers with MMS phones will be able to view STEREOTYPES messages.

Make your Christmas greetings come alive through Addict Mobile.



Agent Code:	EG	SC	SN	RD	SS

Service rate is P15 per message sent.

This service is exclusive to all SMART GSM subscribers (Addict Mobile, SMART Gold, SMART Buddy & Talk 'N Text).

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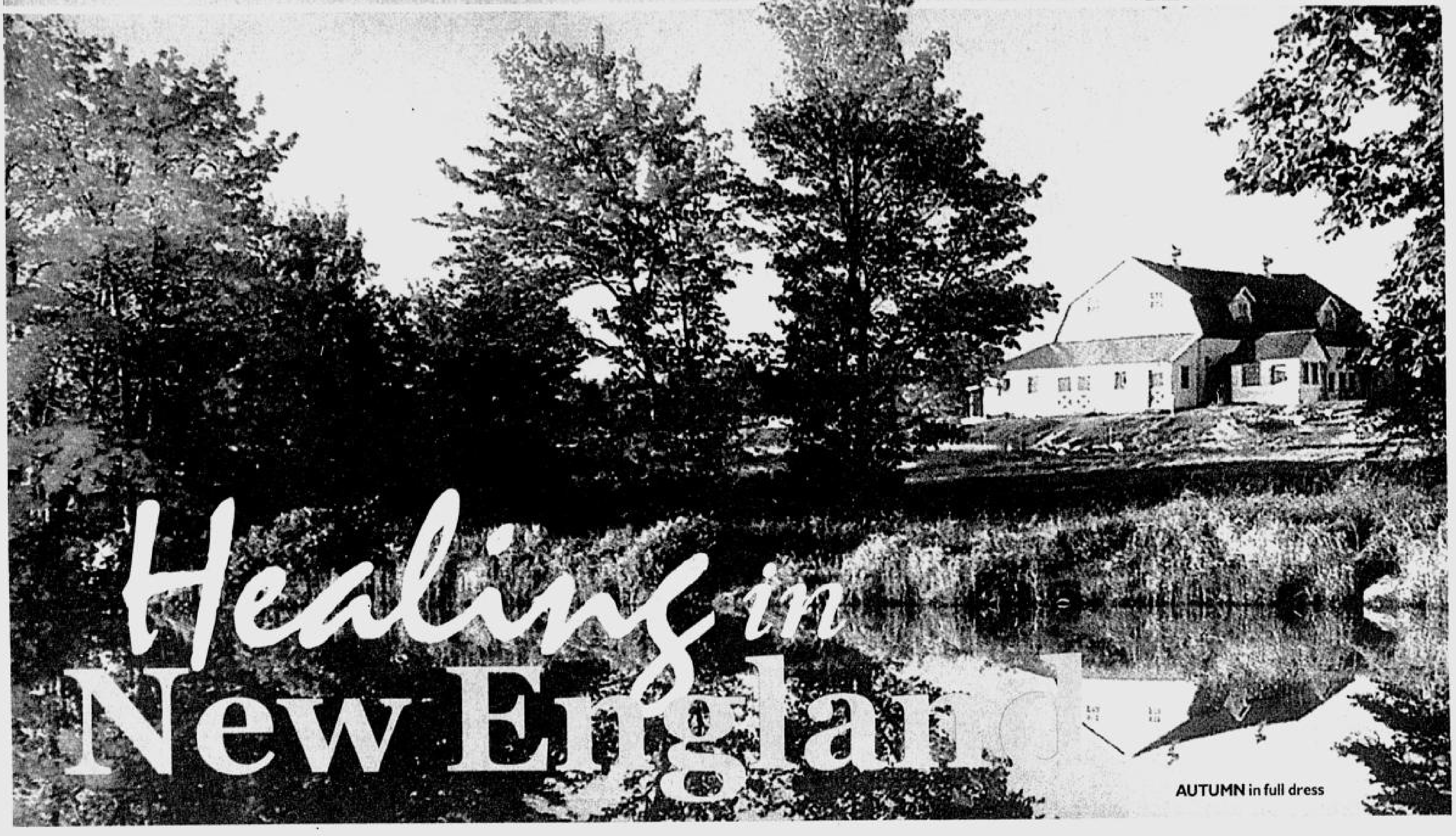
Healing in New England



AUTUMN in full dress

Text and photos
by Bibsy M. Carballo
Contributor

A TRIP along the New England coastline from Nova Scotia to Rhode Island is a potent reminder of the beauty and grandeur of nature, where verdant hills and forests dissolve into azure waters; where people still live simple laid-back lives immersed in old-world values; and where it is still possible to stop the hands of time.

It is an absolutely therapeutic voyage from which one emerges healed and cleansed of the pollutants of modern city living.

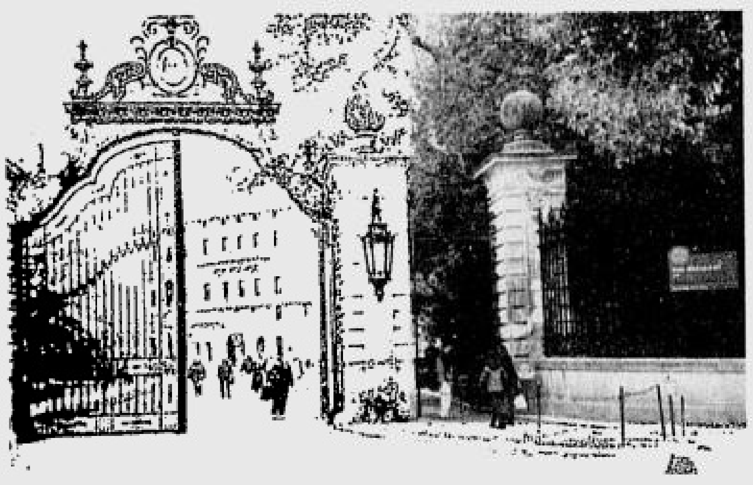
We took this voyage (seven days and seven nights, six destinations) courtesy of Continental Airlines and Princess Cruises at the tail end of autumn, when the nature's tapestry of changing colors brings goose bumps to one's skin and tears to one's eyes.

The Continental non-stop flight from Hong Kong to New York is the shortest ever at 15 hours and 20 minutes. Launched in 2001, it is the only straight flight between the two cities. The plane lands at the Newark Airport in New Jersey, site of the airline's huge hub.

From New York, the Golden Princess with its 2,600 passengers sails past the Statue of Liberty at sunset, bound for Canada and the first port—Halifax in Nova Scotia.

But before arrival in Halifax, one full day at sea on the ship prepares us emotionally for this restful holiday.

The Golden Princess itself is a grand testimony to leisurely travel as one is given various choices in food outlets, heated indoor or outdoor pools, art auctions, game rooms, movies, live entertainment, gym and spa, the library, comfortable quarters—all at one's own time and convenience.



VANDERBILT Mansion in Newport

It's snowing there now, but in the fall, nature's tapestry of changing colors brings tears to one's eyes

SAILING out of the New York harbor

When the French first settled in what is now Northeastern Canada, they named the area Acadia. But when the British claimed the land and expelled more than 6,000 Acadians from their homes (immortalized in Longfellow's deathless poem "Evangeline"), they renamed it Nova Scotia, Latin for New Scotland.

Today's Halifax, capital of Nova Scotia and gateway to the most famous site in the province—Peggy's Cove—is a mosaic of cultures.

The quaint fishing village of 60 inhabitants at Peggy's Cove survives on age-old fishing and tourism. The sturdy lighthouse perched on surf-pounded granite cliffs houses the post office, and is among the most photographed in the world.

SUNSET at Peggy's Cove in Halifax

Our next destination is the port of Saint John in New Brunswick, Canada. Although it is a busy harbor of 125,000 inhabitants, with an average of 55 cruise ships arriving yearly, it is still a sleepy town, surrounded by rock and water where small-town customs and courtesies still exist, and beyond it, 85 percent of unsettled land covered by forest and valley.

The old market still exists at Saint John, and it is still the watering hole of both residents and tourists who seem to treat each other like long-time neighbors, instead of first-time acquaintances.

The Saint John River shares 75 miles of border with the state of Maine in the United States, and visitors from Nova Scotia make a 2-hour, 45-minute trip on a fast ferry daily.

The Golden Princess next docks at Bar Harbor in Maine, a tiny coastal town on the northeastern side of Mount Desert Island, famous for its lobsters and for the Acadia National Park. From the town, one drives 30 minutes to Acadia with its glacier-formed mountains; walking, biking, and running trails; and high points where the ocean storms the granite rocks with a thunderous roar.

As many as three million visitors a year are drawn to the 35 acres of park land mostly donated by the Rockefeller family.

Our fourth stop is Boston, Massachusetts, the only large city on the itinerary, and even then home to only 600,000.

Known as the Cradle of American Independence, the city is filled with historic sights from Faneuil Hall, Beacon Hill (site of the Boston Tea Party), the gold-domed Massachusetts State House whose cornerstone was laid by Samuel Adams and Paul Revere (best known for that midnight ride on horseback to warn the populace of the British invasion), Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the famous Bull & Finch Pub now known as the Cheers pub (after the successful TV series).

Next day, it's back to small-city living in Newport, Rhode Island, with a population of less than 50,000, but transformed into a summer playground of the rich and famous.

It is here where plantation owners from the South and rich families from New York built their estates, now turned into museums for public viewing. We have a choice of Edward Berwin's Elms, the Vanderbilts' The Breakers, the Astors' Beechwood, and Doris Duke's Rough Point. The Breakers gives us a taste of old elegance and a rich artistic heritage.

Most of the mansions stand on acres and acres of greenery, where one can stroll along and feel, even for a few hours, that time can indeed stand still.

And then it's back to the ship and, the following day, disembarkation at the sixth and last destination: New York. We welcome the sight and feel of the Big Apple completely energized and ready for the tragic landmark of Ground Zero, the latest reminder of what it is to live in this dangerous age.

For inquiries, call Cruise Professionals at 813-7407-09.

TRAVELBRIEFS

More holiday specials

ISLAND Cove Resort & Leisure Park in Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite, is offering a "Joyful Holiday" promo until Jan. 15: If you stay for two nights, you can get your third night free or convert it to a gift certificate.

The package covers overnight accommodation in a twin-sharing superior room, continental breakfast, free use of Oceania Pool and outdoor Jacuzzi, and 30-percent discount at the Xiang Li Chinese Food Fusion Restaurant.

You can take your kids to Santa's Corner every Saturday until Jan. 3. Santa Claus will teach them arts, crafts, and puppet making. Special gifts await lucky children.

Bibingka, puto bumbong and *tsa-a*, as well as an assortment of barbecues, are available at the *"Paskong Pondahan"* in front of the Sports Cove at 4-10 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays, until Jan. 4.

For inquiries, call (02) 810-3718 or (046) 434-0210.

* * *

AT THE SUBIC International Hotel in Olongapo City, families are invited to check out the "All 4 Fun on Christmas" package, which covers overnight stay in a deluxe room, breakfast, Christmas Eve buffet and set lunch.

The "Big Bang on New Year's Eve" package, on the other hand, includes overnight stay in a deluxe room, buffet breakfast and New Year's Eve dinner.

The nightly *"Salu-Salo sa Subic Fiesta"* is open from 6 p.m. up to midnight until Dec. 24.

Call the hotel's Manila sales office at 243-222 to 31 or e-mail sales@subichotel.com.

Another lucky Pinoy

A FIRST-TIMER in Singapore is the 150,000th Lucky Filipino Visitor to Singapore in 2003.

For the distinction, Jun Moya, corporate planning and budget control manager of Total (Philippines) Corp., won round-trip business class air tickets to Singapore, a six-day stay for two in a five-star hotel, and S$2,500 in cash.

Moya was welcomed at the Changi Airport by Rocson Chang, Singapore Tourism Board area director for the Philippines and Brunei, and Philippine tourism attaché Phineas Alburo.

Last October, another Filipino, Hazel Weber, was the 125,000th lucky visitor to Singapore.

Still up for grabs is the top prize of STB Philippines' "You're OK" incentive program—an eight-day stay in a premium hotel, including round-trip first class air tickets and S$5,000 cash for the 200,000th Filipino visitor.

The "You're OK!" program is an exclusive marketing effort conducted in the Philippines. It is part of the STB's worldwide "Singapore Roars!" campaign, which ends this month.

For inquiries, contact the STB-Philippines at 636-0258 or call your travel agent.

IRIDISCENT princess dress in blue and pink with beaded bodice and stringed waist

ANGELIC holidays. Kristiana in a soft yellow dress embroidered with rosette

MAAYAN in a spaghetti-strapped white organza dress with pleated bodice and beads

KRISTIANA wears a cup-sleeved pink eyelet dress with beaded bodice

AQUA blue printed dress with matching handbag

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Modeled by pretty princesses Maayan Shani and Kristiana Ponce Enrile, the collection is available at the Children's Wear Department of all SM Department Stores

Have spending power this Christmas

ENJOY the season of sharing without the worries, with Citibank Installment Loan's early Christmas treat.

Citibank Installment Loan offers a 0 percent interest Christmas promotion. Open to first-time customers, the loan will charge 0 percent interest for the first three months of the loan period.

The multi-purpose loan gives spending power with amounts beginning at P15,000. No collateral, deposit or co-maker is necessary. Applicant only needs a minimum annual income of P180,000.

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PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Donna J. Stone GIVE AND TAKE

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5 Presidential pooch
9 Shopper's paradise
13 Drilling site?
18 Oil of —
19 "QB VII" author
20 Bailiwick
21 Breakfast food
22 Slender trace
23 Bank deposit?
24 Columbo or Tamblyn
25 Wandered
26 Start of a remark by Milton Berle
30 Word with fruit or Stanley
31 "Gotcha!"
32 Magnus or McClurg
33 Like some watches
36 "— Cruise" ('59 song)
37 Bracelet bit
39 HS ordeals
43 Baseball's Slaughter
44 Pitfall
46 Agincourt victor
48 Wager
49 Japanese dog
51 Neighbor of Mont.
52 Soft drinks
53 Mild cigar
55 Gob
56 Gershwin heroine
58 Sour
59 Kitchen gadget
60 "Parting is — sweet . . ."
61 Police hdqrs.
62 Gymnast Korbut
65 Ruminate
66 Middle of remark
72 Geraint's lady
73 Vizquel or Epps
74 Lodge brother
75 Dollars for quarters
76 Perfect
78 Ryan's daughter
80 Sportscaster Albert
81 Objective
84 Boxer Liston
85 Nest noise
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87 New Mexico's state flower
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127 "Star Trek" android

DOWN
1 "Would you look at that!"
2 Landed
3 Cowboy star LaRue
4 Categorized
5 Nitpicker
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7 Mrs. Munster
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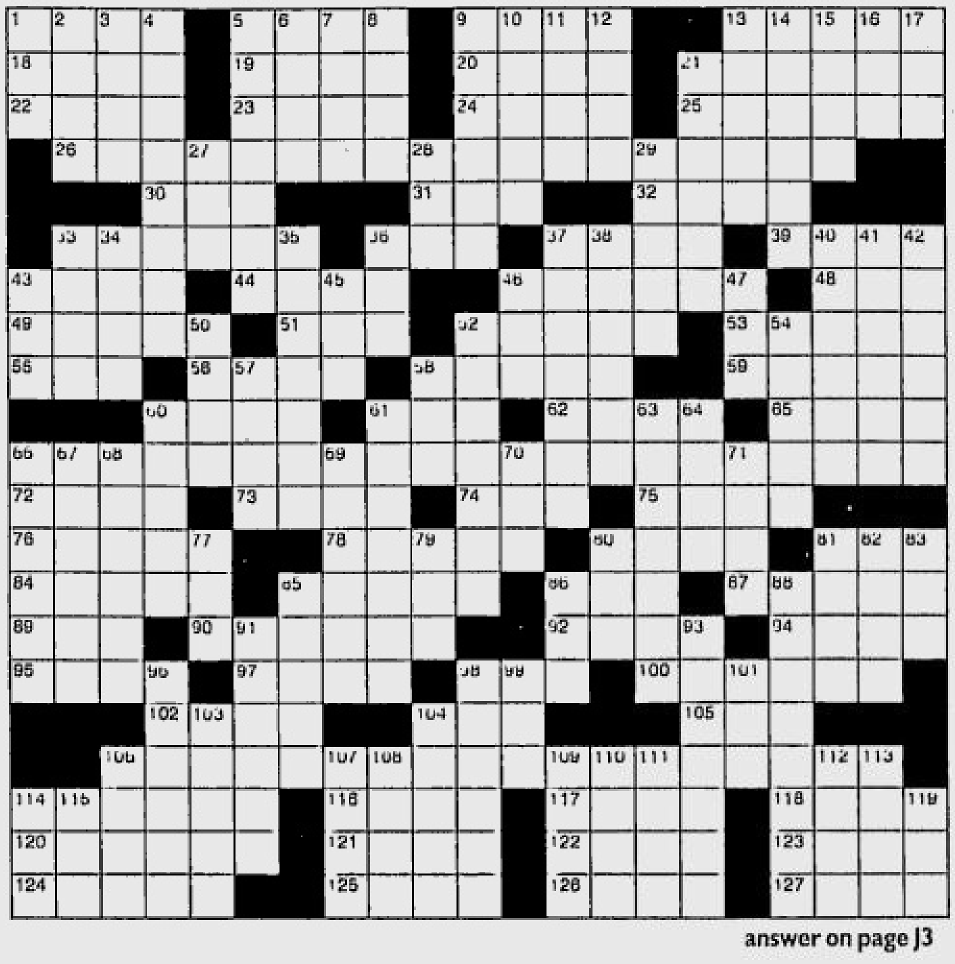
36 Health —
37 The Flintstones' home
38 Make possible
40 Problem solver?
41 Singer Stratas
42 Floor, on Fleet Street
43 Put away a pie
45 They may be personal
46 Farm tool
47 Tape player: abbr.
50 Be adjacent to
52 Manage to gather
54 The sky, at times?
57 Canyon sound
58 From — Z
60 Family car
61 Rock's Dire —
63 African skyscraper?
64 Maintain
66 Samisen player
67 Like some pools
68 Strauss city
69 Patriot Hale
70 Common street name
71 Covet
77 Caustic substance
79 Singing syllable
80 Tillis or Torme
81 Lot size
82 Laid on buttercream
83 Merry month
85 Like autumn weather
86 Singer Seals
88 Put into service
91 Buy back
93 Hostile
96 Pancakes-to-be
98 Newspaper circular
99 Hubbub
101 Westminster winner
103 Did nothing
104 Option
106 TV's "Leave — Beaver"
107 Piccadilly figure
108 Art subject
109 Salamander
110 Aspen apparatus
111 Present
112 Chalky cheese
113 Horse's gait
114 Gumshoe
115 Hibachi residue
119 Out — limb



answer on page J3

Catching A Glimpse Of Life's Special Moments Made More Expressive Through Multimedia Messaging Service

Young couple Jose and Patty Adrias have to be separated for weeks or months on end because of Jose's job as a logistics consultant.

The job takes Jose, 32, to places like Saipan or Palau to implement projects that his Manila-based company has.

The couple has a one-year-old son, Luis, who was only 9 months old when Jose went to Saipan last August.

"My husband travels to different countries as often as needed by his job," says Patty, who works in the finance department of a freight forwarding company in Manila. "His work requires him to leave us, no matter how hard it is for him. He just arrived from Saipan last November. He stayed there for three months to work on a project."

During these months that Jose was in Saipan, Luis had grown up fast.

"Luis has experienced several milestones already, like the first time he walked, the first time he talked, and of course, his first birthday," says Patty.

Jose has since returned to his family in Sucat, Parañaque last month to celebrate Christmas with them. In January, he would have to go back to Saipan to continue working for his company's project there.

Jose could have missed these important moments because he was not with his family then, if not for Touch Mobile's Multimedia Messaging Service, which enabled Jose to connect to Patty and Luis while he was out of the country.

Through MMS Patty regularly sends pictures of Luis to Jose through her Touch Mobile cell phone.

"This way, Jose also witnessed how his son was growing up," says Patty.

Jose himself sends pictures to Patty through his MMS capable cellphone.

"We knew what and how he was doing at work," says Patty. "More importantly Luis can feel that his father is still around even if he is so many miles away from us. The pictures Jose sent regularly through my cell phone helped a lot in easing our longing for him. He also practically saw Luis grow up before his eyes with the pictures I send through my cell phone."

According to Patty, Jose also never fails to call her up through her cell phone every day.

"Even if it's just three minutes, it matters so much to our relationship," she adds.

The couple uses prepaid cards, which had proven to be more economical than a roaming service, according to Patty.

She says they spend only P2,000 a month on cell cards whenever Jose is abroad.

Touch Mobile's Multimedia Messaging Service or MMS, one of their favorite services, allows subscribers to send and receive photo messages anytime and anywhere.

This service enables families like Jose's and Patty's to stay in touch with each other and share life's special moments as they happen through their mobile phones.

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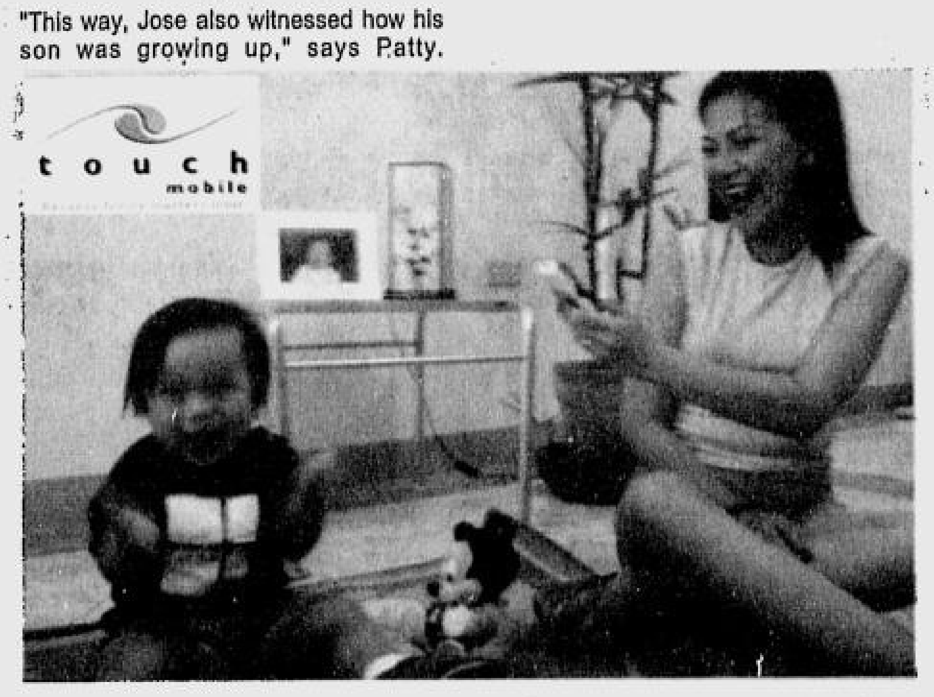

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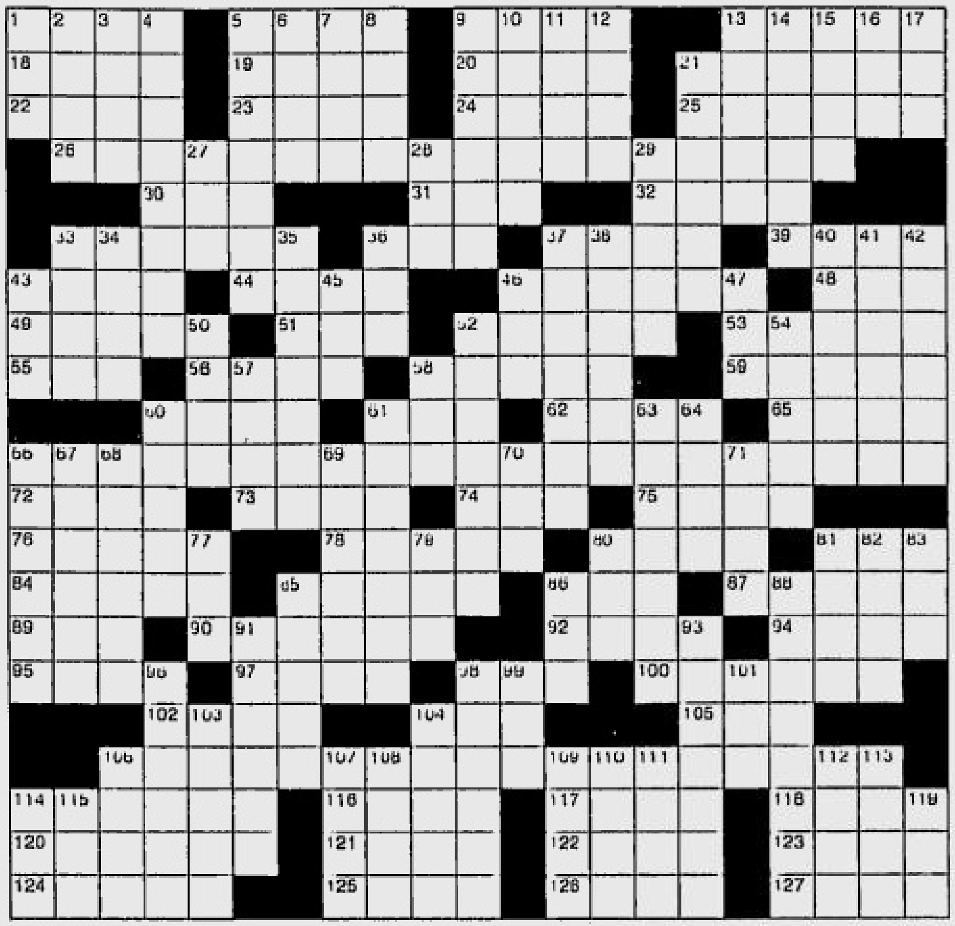
64 Maintain
66 Samisen player
67 Like some pools
68 Strauss city
69 Patriot Hale
70 Common street name
71 Covet
77 Caustic substance
79 Singing syllable
80 Tillis or Torme
81 Lot size
82 Laid on buttercream
83 Merry month
85 Like autumn weather
86 Singer Seals
88 Put into service
91 Buy back
93 Hostile
96 Pancakes-to-be
98 Newspaper circular
99 Hubbub
101 Westminster winner
103 Did nothing
104 Option
106 TV's "Leave — Beaver"
107 Piccadilly figure
108 Art subject
109 Salamander
110 Aspen apparatus
111 Present
112 Chalky cheese
113 Horse's gait
114 Gumshoe
115 Hibachi residue
119 Out — limb



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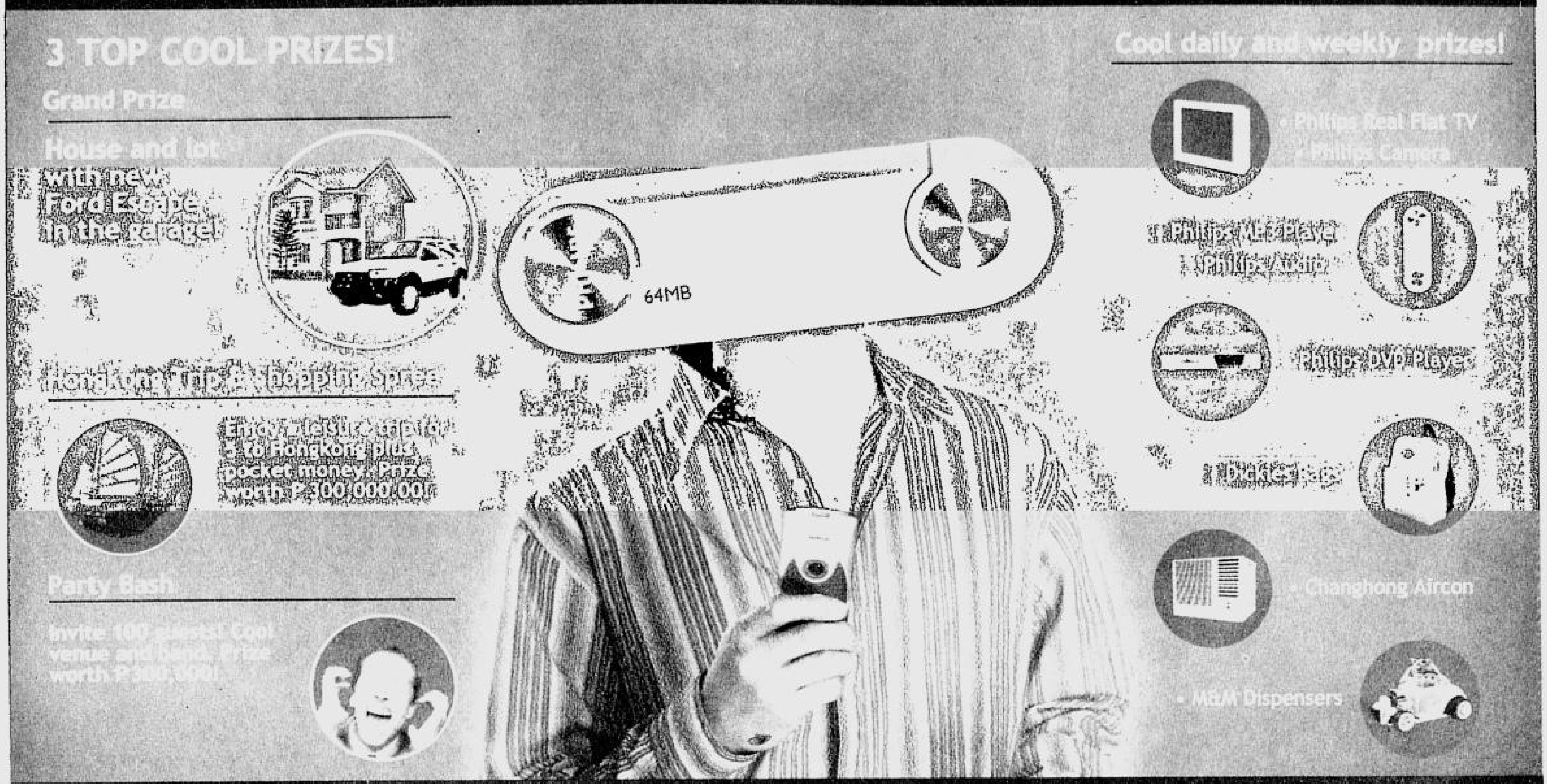
touch
mobile

Over ₱3.5 million in cool, cool prizes!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House and lot with new Ford Escape in the garage!
Hongkong Trip & Shopping Spree
Enjoy a leisure trip for 3 to Hongkong plus pocket money. Prize worth ₱300,000.00!
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Invite 100 guests! Cool venue and band. Prize worth ₱300,000!
64MB
Cool daily and weekly prizes!
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2 Philips Audio
Philips DVD Player
2 Dickies Bags
• Changhong Aircon
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Get a chance to win a house & lot with a new Ford Escape in the garage, plus other cool prizes in the daily and weekly draws!

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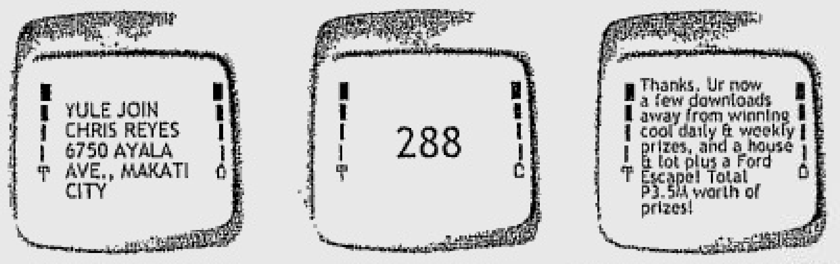
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6750 AYALA
AVE., MAKATI
CITY
288
Thanks. Ur now a few downloads away from winning cool daily & weekly prizes, and a house & lot plus a Ford Escape! Total P3.5M worth of prizes!

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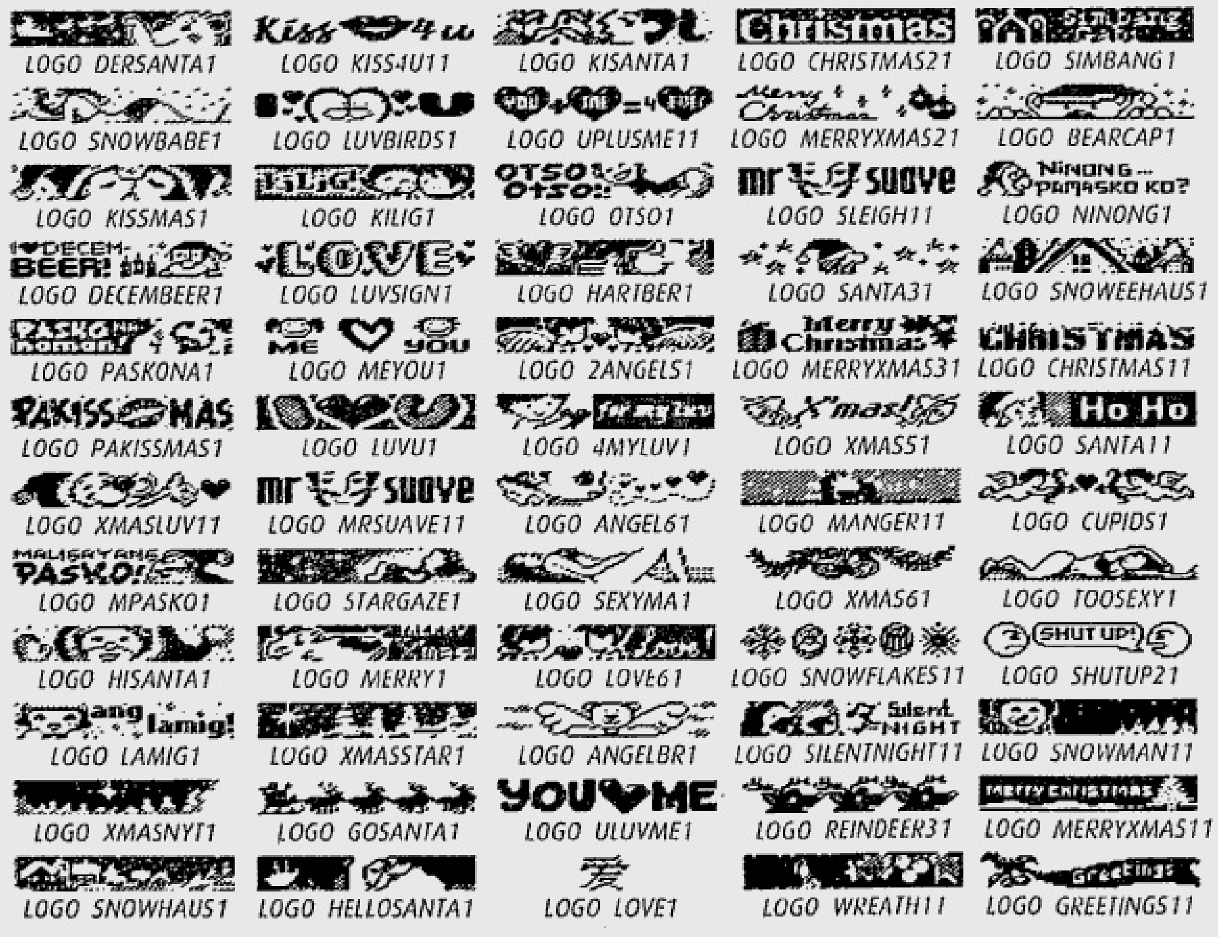
	₱30.00 service 12 entries/delivery	
	Java Games	

Operator Logos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LOGO KISANTA1
LOGO CHRISTMAS21
LOGO SIMBANG1
LOGO SNOWBABE1
LOGO LUVBIRDS1
LOGO UPLUSME11
LOGO MERRYXMAS21
LOGO BEARCAP1
LOGO KISSMAS1
LOGO KILIG1
LOGO OTSO1
LOGO SLEIGH11
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LOGO DECEMBEER1
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LOGO HARTBER1
LOGO SANTA31
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LOGO MEYOU1
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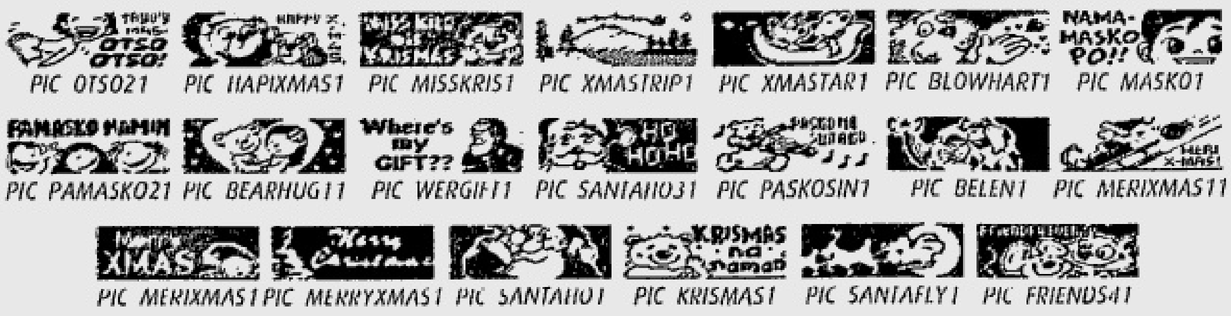
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Ringtones

RINGTONES	ARTIST/COMPOSER	KEYWORDS
Auld Lang Syne	Traditional	**TONE AULDLANG1**
Hark the Herald Angels Sing	Traditional	**TONE HARK1**
I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day	Traditional	**TONE BELLSONXMAS1**
Jingle Bells	Traditional	**TONE JINGLEBELLS1**
Jolly Old Saint Nick	Traditional	**TONE SAINTNICK1**
Joy to the World	Traditional	**TONE JOYWORLD1**
Merrily We Roll Along	Traditional	**TONE MERRILY1**
O Come All Ye Faithful	Traditional	**TONE OCOME1**
O Holy Night	Traditional	**TONE HOLYNIGHT1**
O Little Town of Bethlehem	Traditional	**TONE OLITTLE1**
Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer	Traditional	**TONE RUDOLPH1**
Santa Claus is Coming to Town	Traditional	**TONE SANTACLAUS1**
Silent Night	Traditional	**TONE SILENTNITE1**
The First Noel	Traditional	**TONE FIRSTNOEL1**
We Three Kings of Orient Are	Traditional	**TONE 3KINGS1**
We Wish You A Merry Christmas	Traditional	**TONE WEWISHU1**
Silent Night	Destiny'S Child	**TONE SILENTN1**
Deck The Halls	Neil Diamond	**TONE DECKTHE1**
The Chipmunk Song	The Chipmunk	**TONE CHIPMUNK1**
I'll Be Home For Christmas	traditional	**TONE ILLBE1**
Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas	various	**TONE HAVEUR1**
Mr. Suave	Parokya ni Edgar	**TONE MRSUAVE1**
Spaghetti Song	Sexbomb	**TONE SPAG1**
Happy	Rolling Stones	**TONE HAPPY1**
Where Is The Love	Black Eyed Peas	**TONE WERISLUV1**
Maybe	Enrique Iglesias	**TONE MAYBE1**
Perfect	True Faith	**TONE PERFECT1**
I'll Be	Edwin McCain	**TONE IBE1**
Kanlungan	Noel Cabangon	**TONE KANLUNGAN1**
Awit Ng Kabataan	Rivermaya	**TONE KABATAAN1**
Unwell	Matchbox 20	**TONE UNWELL1**
From The Inside	Linkin Park	**TONE FROMTHE1**
Broken Vow	Lara Fabian	**TONE BROKEN1**
Get Busy	Sean Paul	**TONE GETBUSY1**
Baby, I'm In Love	Thalia	**TONE BABYIM1**
Mr. Suave Version 2	Parokya ni Edgar	**TONE MRSUAVE21**
Gold	Spandau Ballet	**TONE GOLD1**

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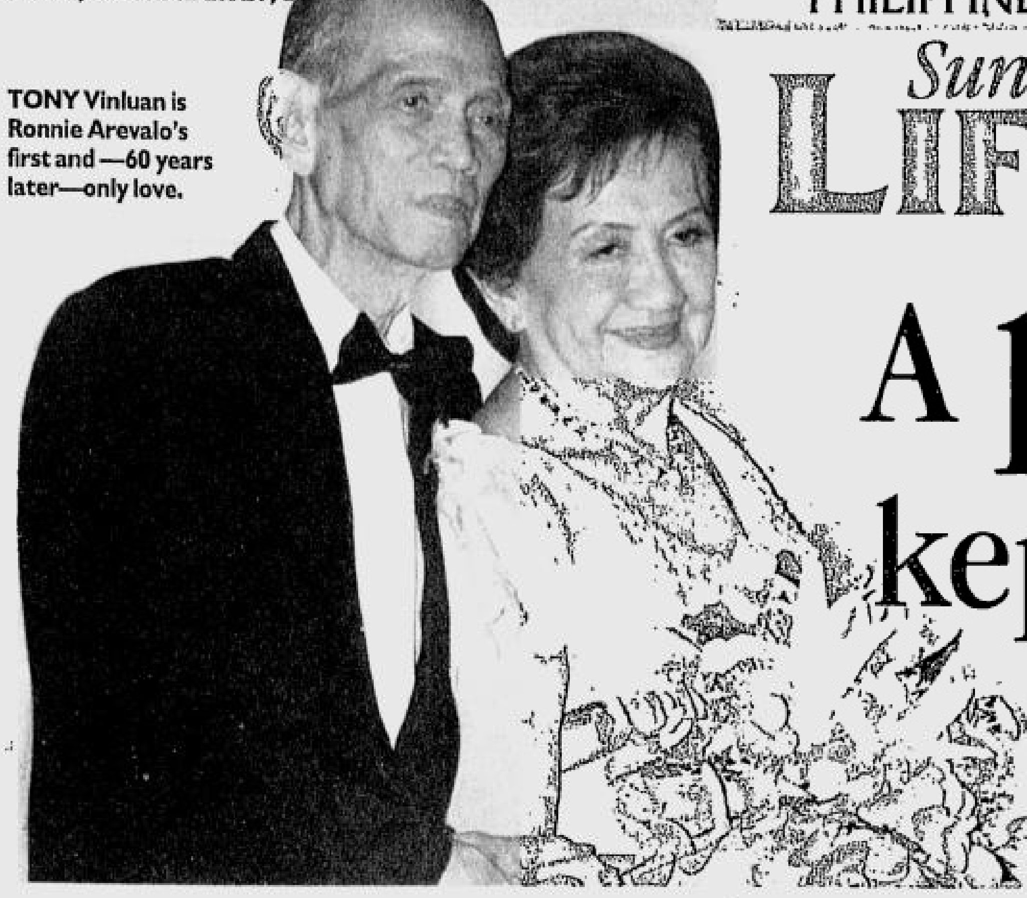

TONY Vinluan is Ronnie Arevalo's first and —60 years later—only love.

A promise kept for 60 years—and counting

To get her to say yes, Tony Vinluan vowed to spoil and pamper Ronnie. Six decades of married bliss later, she has no complaints

Text by Cheche V. Moral
Photos by Rudy Esperas

"IF YOU can't spoil me, then don't marry me," the pert and pretty 17-year-old challenged the young man.

One look and he was smitten, but she played hard to get. After all, as a battalion sponsor of the University of the Philippines' Corps of Cadets, she had many strapping young men to choose from.

She repeatedly turned down the tall young man from Lingayen, Pangasinan, saying, "Tony, you are [like an] older brother [to me]."

But the 19-year-old, a law sophomore at the Ateneo de Manila University, was unfazed, relentless in his pursuit of the city girl. He regularly brought her flowers and chocolates. At socials, he would patiently wait to dance with her.

She recalls, "My friends would say, 'Ronnie, *sige na. Ang bait-bait ni* Tony.'" And she would reply, "*Magaling pa kayo sa akin! Kayo na lang!*"

Then war broke out and he fought in Bataan. The young woman missed him and his kindness. Knowing she couldn't bear to lose Tony, she sent him an *estampita* of the Immaculate Concepcion and a note: "T-Pray to our Virgin Mary. She will never leave you. I'll wait for you when this thing ends.—R."

A promise kept

Col. Antonio Vinluan and the former Veronica Arevalo, both in their 80s now, met through a common friend 64 years ago on Sept. 4, 1939.

On Dec. 6, with their six children, in-laws and grandchildren, Tony and Ronnie Vinluan renewed the promise they made to each other 60 years ago. They wed at Quiapo Church on the fourth anniversary of their meeting, Sept. 4, 1943.

But the diamond celebration had to wait until after Tony recovered from a recent heart attack. The Mass was held at the St. Ignatius Cathedral in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

"It's a triple celebration because on Dec. 2, Daddy (Tony) had his 84th birthday, and I'll turn 82 on Dec. 23," Ronnie explains. "And my children said, 'Mommy, don't hold it on Sept. 4. It's raining cats and dogs!'"

In a time when surviving even one year of

A PROMISE/12

FOR better or for worse: Tony and Ronnie on their wedding day, Sept. 4, 1943, at Quiapo Church.

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OOFUN
Hey! What were you expecting... chocolates? Hehehe! Of course not! My kisses are much more sweeter! Mmmmwah!!! I LOVE YOU BABY!!

[maybe]
OOFUN
Awww... he looks so sad. He was really looking forward to give you my gift. Won't you accept it? Please say YES!

[no]
OOFUN
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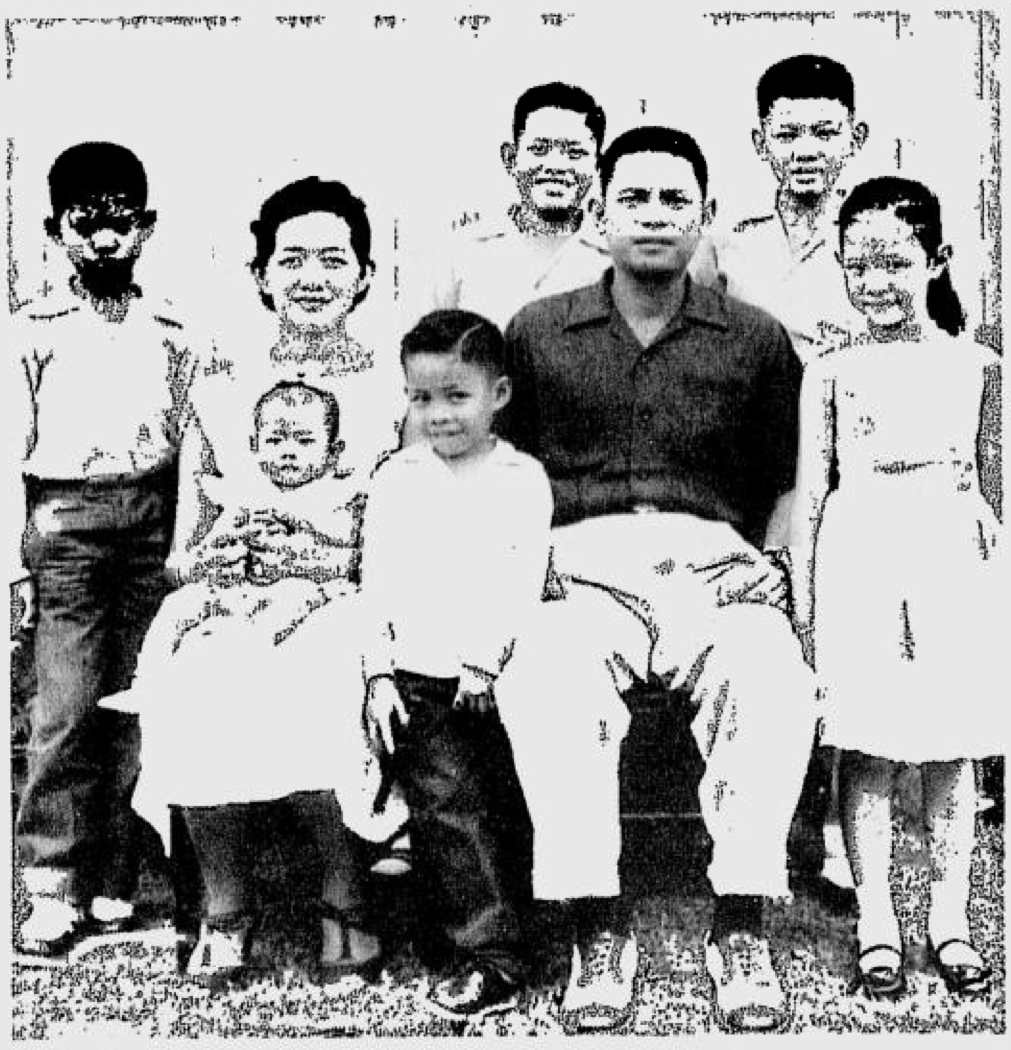


TONY and Ronnie with their brood, December 1956

THE Vinluans: (back row, from left) Ginger Vinluan and husband Chucky Olivares, Major General Roland, Danny, Robert, Liza's husband Dr. Hector Santos Jr., Dave Smith; (second row) April V. Santos, Pepper Vinluan, Roland's wife Susie, Roger, Danny's wife Myrna de Paz, Marilyn, Dr. Liza, Raquel V. Smith, Jio Santos; (front) Jam Santos with Lolo and Lola

A promise kept for 60 years—and counting

ON their 60th wedding anniversary with Bishop Ramon Arguelles (left) and Msgr. Daniel Sta. Maria (right)

marriage is like shooting for the moon, the Vinluans are truly remarkable.

"They ask, 'What's your secret?'" and Ronnie replies with a shrug and a knowing smile on her lips. But her husband says: "Lots of sacrifice."

They can't recall a single major argument. She says they hardly ever quarreled. "It's a question of how you solve your problem," he adds.

His being a military officer and her being a woman with strong opinions never came between them. "Be understanding...be patient," she advises. "When one is on fire, be quiet. Don't argue...be calm."

Bright children

After the war, Tony finished his law studies, then his Master of Laws, at the University of Manila. Ronnie shifted from Pre-med and finished Home Economics in UP. After retiring from the armed forces in 1972, he worked as corporate secretary of the Philippine Communications Satellite company (Philcomsat) until 1996.

Ronnie became a full-time housewife and mother. "I didn't like to work. I didn't want to leave my children. I supervised them, even in doing their homework. They were all honor students."

The Vinluans have six bright children, who studied at the Ateneo, Assumption and Maryknoll.

The eldest is retired Maj. Gen. Roland of the Philippine Air Force. Second son, Danny, who has a master in business administration degree, now owns franchises of a pizza chain in Atlanta, Georgia.

The third and fifth sons, Robert and Roger, both engineers, live in Missouri. Daughter Marilyn, a former flight attendant and Karilagan model, lives in San Diego, California.

Ronnie, a doctor's daughter who's "a frustrated *doktora*", lives her dream through youngest daughter Liza, a pediatrician at the Philippine Children's Medical Center.

"They were all *mabait*," the mom says proudly. She was in charge of disciplining the children, while her husband took care of the finances.

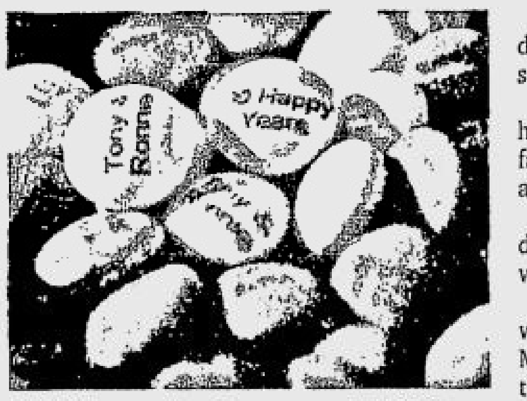
The Vinluan children are all married, and have given their parents 13 grandchildren. There is one great-granddaughter.

'Triumvirate' with God

Although two of their sons are divorced, it was never an issue with the older Vinluans.

"They're old enough to know [what's right or wrong]. They chose their own wives and husbands. It's their life. [I told them] make your own bed and lie on it," the mother says.

Tony adds, "We let them decide."



SWEET as candies: Custom-made M&Ms to commemorate the couple's milestone, served at the reception

ON A cruise to Alaska on their 55th anniversary, 1998

They also didn't need to advise their children how to treat their own spouses. "They saw how we treated each other," he says.

Ronnie understands that women nowadays have to have careers and contribute to the family's finances. In fact, she herself had a real estate business, working from their home.

She says for marriages to survive these days, couples have to create a "triumvirate" with God, and "always pray."

Though ailing, Tony goes to Mass regularly with his wife. They go to the Kapihan at the Manila Hotel on Mondays, and the Westin for the Bulong-Pulungan on Tuesdays.

Before Tony fell ill, the couple regularly visited their children in the United States, went on cruises and traveled all over Europe. Ronnie gave up her green card because Tony didn't like to live in America.

If there is one sore point between them, it is her penchant for buying things he says she doesn't need. The loving husband would give in without a word, though, if she likes something.

"I was an only daughter, so I was a spoiled brat. He promised to spoil me, and he kept his promise," Ronnie says.

Soul mates

Tony was struck by the way Ronnie conducted herself, and how she treated others. She is very understanding and charitable, he says.

Though not demonstrative "because he's a military man," she says her husband is so patient and good. He has no vices, and was always faithful to her.

The couple remains in the house where they've lived for 51 years. Ronnie, spirited and loquacious, says, "I'm his nurse, no complaints. I shampoo him, give him pedicure, manicure. I can still travel, but I don't want to leave him."

Tony lost 30 pounds after his illness and walks unsteadily. However, like the gallant young man he once was, he still assists his sprightlier wife when she gets up from her seat. They guide each other as they tackle the stairs.

Ronnie has always feared for her soldier husband's safety. He has been involved in a couple of ambushes although he was unscathed. "He has nine lives," his wife says.

But when he got sick, Ronnie was devastated. "God, don't take him," she prayed. "If you take him, take me, too."

Now her wish is for them to live longer. "*Ginawa ng Diyos talaga*. We're soul mates."

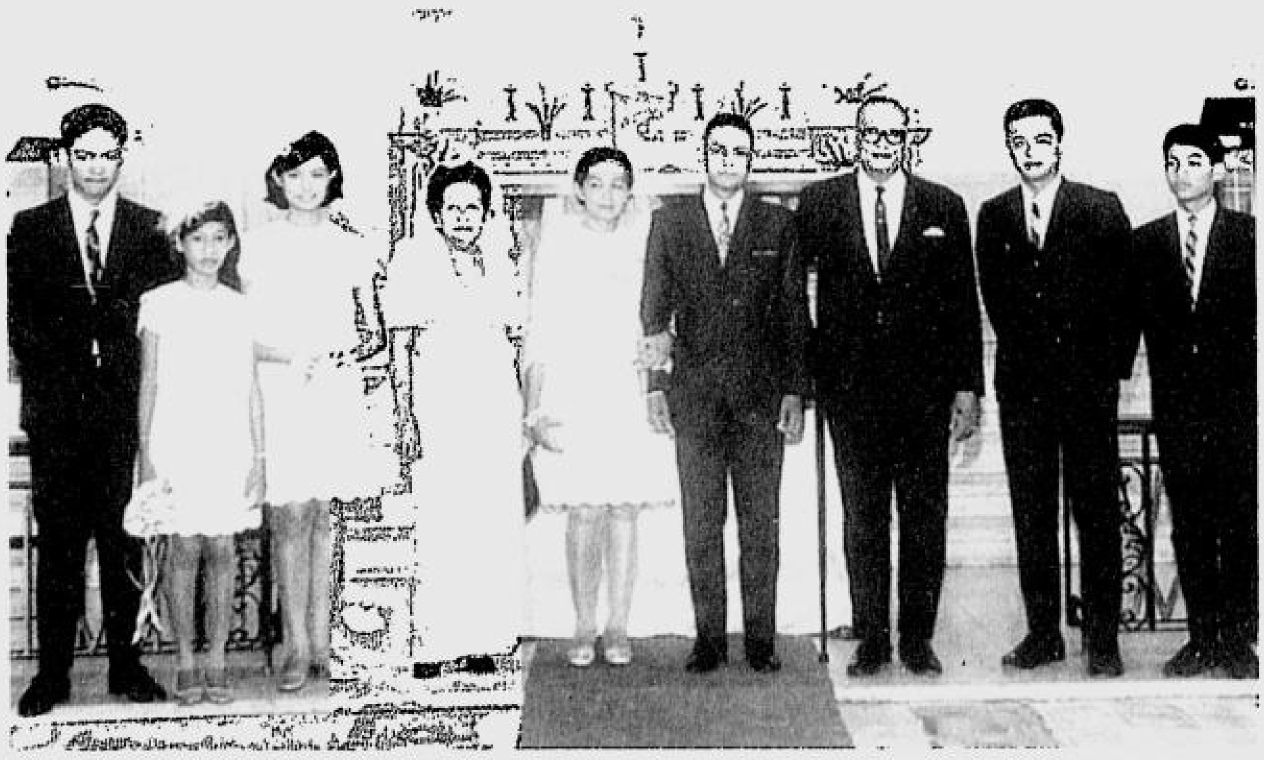
If Tony were to live his life all over again, he says, "I'll marry her again, definitely."

E-mail the author at cmoral@inquirer.com.ph

TONY RONNIE

GOLDEN anniversary with their children, in-laws and grandchildren

SILVER wedding anniversary, 1968



ON their silver wedding anniversary, 1968

ON their golden anniversary in 1993 with their "six precious jewels": (from left) Roger, Robert, Marilyn, Roland, Liza and Danny

Operation Smile makes Christmas merrier for 33 children

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Darang

THIRTY-THREE children from Kalinga-Apayao and some Ilocos areas can have a merrier Christmas with their improved facial features after undergoing free operations by plastic surgeons of Operation Smile Philippines.

The children, who had cleft lip or cleft palate, traveled 19 hours with their parents early in November to the Benguet General Hospital. They stayed at the Bethesda Ministries of Donald Soriano and were cared for by Jeffrey Dimas at the Little Flower Convent.

Humanitarian individuals made the mission possible with the help of Maryknoll Class '66 and '70. Working together were Rico and Telly Agcaolli of the Baguio Country Club, Babes Narciso who coordinated the mission with Lions past district governor Ric Chan, businesswoman Coco Merrill, dentist Linda Apil-Winter, Dolly Cid and the Monday Afternoon Club. Dr. Esteban Piok, chief of hospital, gave his full support.

The team consisted of 22 volunteer plastic surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, speech pathologist, medical records coordinators and Dr. Vilma Hao, executive director.

Plastic surgeon Dr. Sonny Santos was team leader. Helping him were Drs. Alex de Leon and Fred Callanta. Anesthesiologists were Drs. .Cynthia de Leon and Lilian Madrilejo. Rowena Velasquez was the nurse, Sheryl Sibug, the speech pathologist. Bles Peren was assistant coordinator.

Coordinating medical records were former Bacolod Rep. Edith Villanueva, OSP president; Babot Oreta, Monina Lao, Rica Villalon, Dang Rodriguez, Becky Tan and Angelina Tan who belong to Maryknoll Class '66 and '70.

According to Edith Villanueva, 15,000 children have been operated on free since Operation Smile International came to the Philippines in 1982. Dr. Bill Mcgee and his wife Cathy went to Naga for its first mission.

Operation Smile operates in 21 countries, the largest humanitarian effort benefiting indigent children. The next mission in the Philippines will be Feb. 18-28 in Naga, Davao and Cebu.

Babot Oreta says funds have to be raised to pay for the transportation and accommodation of volunteers joining the mission. To help, text Dr. Vi Hao at 0917-3244684 or Bles Peren at 0919-402-3379.

Reflecting on Christmas

Fr. Charles Prass, OMI, former chaplain of the San Lazaro Hospital and National Mental Hospital who now lives in Shakopee, Minnesota, wrote Mila Dolores on the 58th anniversary of his priesthood. The 85-year-old priest reflected on Christmas when Jesus was born and how we could keep in touch with Jesus in the Eucharist during daily Masses.

Fr. Prass wrote: "This is the great mystery of the Incarnation, which took place in the womb of the Virgin Mary on March 25 in our liturgy. Now, a full-term baby, He became visible on Christmas day in Bethlehem. Bishop Fulton Sheen, in his first booklet in the early '20s, calls this The Divine Romance—the union of God and man by the power of the Holy Spirit—a supreme act of Divine Love.

"This happens at every Mass: the Eternal Word becomes flesh under the appearance of bread and wine at the moment of Consecration. The teacher asked, holding up a crucifix, 'What is the difference between Jesus on the Cross and Jesus in the Host?' The little one answered, 'The Jesus we see is not really there, the Jesus we cannot see is really there.'

"This is my Christmas wish to you—that, if at all possible, you attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass daily and worthily receive Holy Communion. This is one practice you'll never regret when at last you close your eyes."

First Communion

The First Communion of Trini Mathay and her best friend Therese Mercado at the Stella Orientis Oratory of the University of Asia and the Pacific was memorable not only for them, but for their respective families as well. Pinky Mathay taught and prepared the two girls for First Communion in her own home.

Monina Allarey Mercado, grandma of Therese, remembers the day so well. White roses and gerbera adorned the altar. The communicants, in beautiful white cotton dresses, knelt in the sanctuary. Fr. Gary Soria heard the girls' first confession.

Trini is the daughter of Pinky and Bu Mathay, while Therese is the only daughter of Mila and Wawel Mercado.

Help for Benedictines

Fr. Savio Ma. Siccuan, OSB, prior of the Monastery of Transfiguration in Malaybalay, Bukidnon is asking for help for the community, so it can continue to pay the salaries of farmers who depend on their work for income. The land around the monastery is planted with coffee, corn and peanuts.

Fr. Siccuan wrote: "Our community is struggling to find a way of earning its subsistence. We do not have enough capital to work with our hand. Money for food and medical care for the monks is also running low. The present economic situation in our country does not help our situation. It is because of these concerns that we appeal to your generous hearts. We welcome any donation or Mass intentions. We assure you of our prayers and may God reward you for your generosity. We also assure you that some of your donations will benefit the poor farmers of our locality as we always make it our priority to employ them in our projects and share with them whatever we can in terms of surplus food or materials."

Those who wish to help can deposit their donations to the current account La Orden Mindanao Inc. #206-101-2578, Bank of Philippine Islands (Malaybalay branch).

Helping malnourished kids

Rosamy Ruth Lim, who speaks Tausug, visited the Kalinayahan Feeding Center in Jolo, Sulu and found out from Sis. Genevieve Damaso, OND, that the children were very malnourished. Rosamy suggested Reliv's Now for kids. The nun took up the suggestion and the kids were given cold glasses of the juice. The nun said the kids looked better afterward. Those wanting to help other malnourished children can text Rosamy and order the product at (0917) 621-0162.

Sto. Niño book

The coffee-table book, "The Holy Child Devotion in the Philippines," is still available in all branches of the National Bookstore and in the shop of Ben Farrales. Call 5248439 to order. Written by Abe Florendo in collaboration with Des Bautista and with photos by George Tapan, the book is a beautiful collection of stories on the devotion to the Sto. Niño in different places. Also available in Bookmark and the Catholic Book Center, it is a perfect gift for Christmas.

Happy anniversary to us

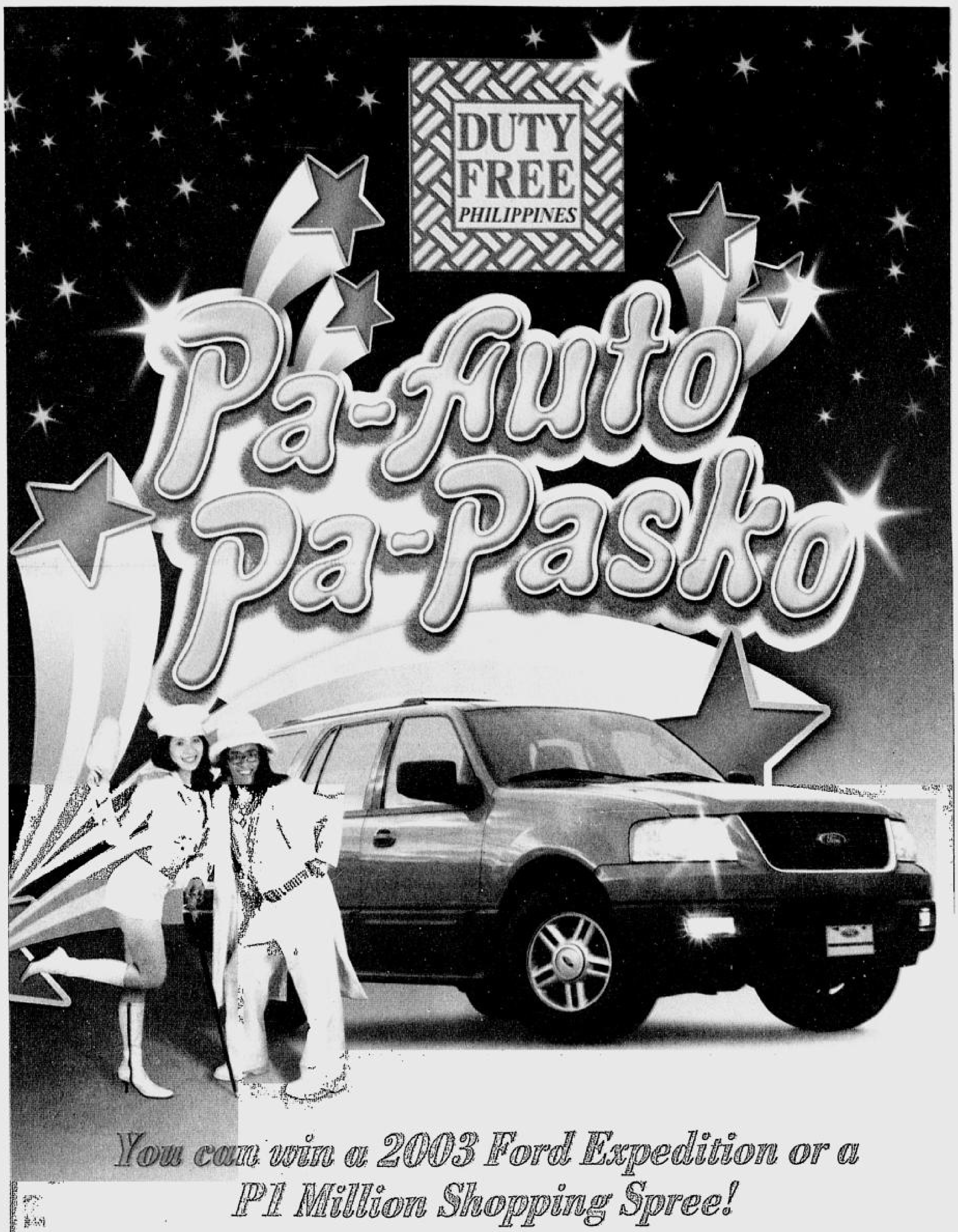
This column is 16 years old, having started Dec. 18, 1987 when I wrote about the miracle of Our Lady of Manaoag in my life. In April 1985, I was successfully operated on for achalasia (a condition in which the normal muscular activity of the esophagus is disturbed) by Dr. William Olalia.

All the time I was sick, 1981-85, unable to assimilate food and water the normal way because a constriction in my esophagus blocked the mouth of the stomach, my grandmother Marcela Darang was praying to Our Lady of Manaoag whom she called "Apo Baket."

The operation on April 23, 1985 was successful and, for the first time in a long while, water went straight into my stomach. I wrote about this experience. Llita Logarta was the lifestyle editor then. With this story, I was able to promote the devotion to Our Lady, giving away free novenas to devotees all over the Philippines.

It's been 18 years since my operation. The problem has never recurred. Thanks be to God. I pray that you will have a sickness-free season. Happy Christmas to all of you!

OPERATION SMILE. Newly operated children pose with volunteers Rica Villalon, Babot Oreta, Monina Lao and Dang Rodriguez.



You can win a 2003 Ford Expedition or a P1 Million Shopping Spree!

Promo period is from November 23, 2003 to January 15, 2004. Draw date is on January 30, 2004.

PROMO MECHANICS:

1. All qualified travelers pursuant to the existing laws (Regular Filipino Traveler, OFW, Balikbayan and Foreign Individual Traveler) may avail of the "Pa-Auto, Pa-Pasko!" promo. Promo is valid both in **Duty Free Philippines Fiestamall** and **Duty Free Waterfront** in Lahug Cebu.
2. For every $100 worth of purchase, a customer will be entitled to one (1) raffle coupon.
3. Participating customers should present their DFP shopping card and receipts at the claim counter to get their computer printed raffle coupons, affix their signature and drop their entries at designated drop boxes located at Duty Free malls.
4. A participant can only win once. Should his/her name be drawn more than once, he/she will get the bigger prize.
5. Only entries received on or before January 15, 2004 shall be qualified.
6. Raffle draw will be on January 30, 2004 at Duty Free Philippines Fiestamall, at 3:00 p.m.
7. One Million Peso Shopping Spree is in the form of Gift Certificates.
8. Prizes are tax paid and not convertible to cash. All purchases are subject to Customs rules and regulations. Customs duties and taxes for electronic purchases of non-Balikbayans and non-OFWs will be paid in cash and shouldered by the winner.
9. Winners will be notified by registered mail and announced in leading national daily newspapers. Prizes may be claimed at Marketing Department, Duty Free Philippines Fiestamall upon presentation of valid IDs.
10. Employees of Duty Free Philippines, PC&V and their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity shall not be allowed to join the promo.
11. Prizes not redeemed within 60 days after notification will be forfeited upon approval of DTI.

The best things in life are duty-free.

Under RA 9174, Balikbayans and OFWs arriving between Nov.15 and Jan.15 can shop within 30 days from date of arrival.

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Milestones

We're accepting announcements of weddings and engagements. Please send the following typewritten information: names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, gown designer and other related information. Readers can send sketches of gowns and pictures of the couple to the INQUIRER *office, or P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City, or e-mail pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. This will be printed depending on space availability and at no cost to the sender.*

CUERDO-ANCHETA

Liza Cuerdo, daughter of **Romeo** and **Virginia Cuerdo**, will marry **Noel Ancheta**, son of **Prudencio** and **Rosalina Ancheta**, on Dec. 28 at Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Pangasinan. Reception will be at The Regency Hotel. The bride will wear an off-shoulder gown with an empire-cut bodice embellished with rhinestones, caviar beads and faux pearls.

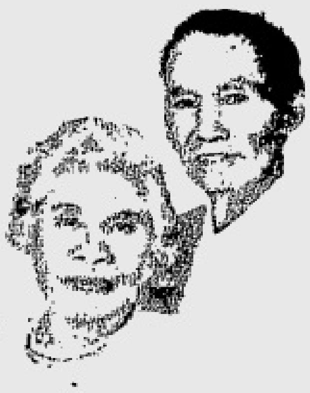
REYES DEBUT

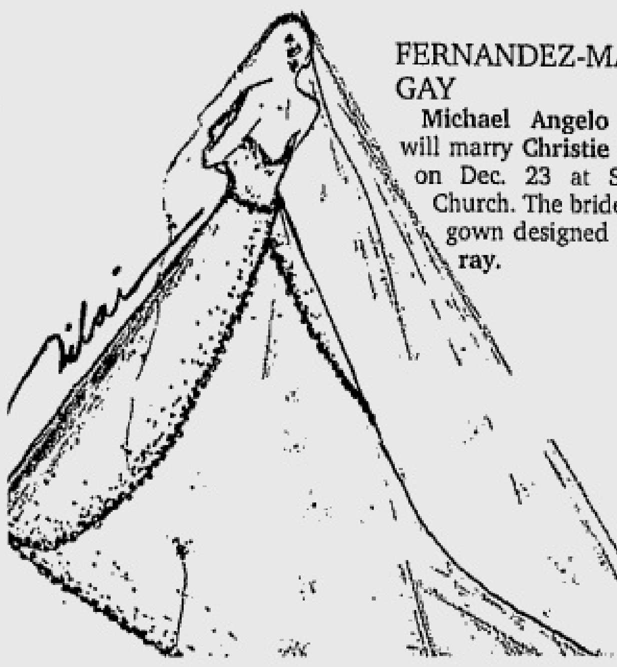
Valyn Jeny Sevilla Reyes, youngest daughter of lawyer **Victor C. Reyes** and engineer **Janette Reyes**, will celebrate her 18th birthday today at the Don Mariano Hall of the Caceres Hotel, Naga City. She will wear a gown designed by **Jo Tuy** of Encore Wedding Specialist. Reyes is a freshman pre-Veterinary Medicine student at the Camarines Sur State Agricultural Colleges.

NAVARRA 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Paterno and **Lorlina Navarra** renewed their marriage vows yesterday in celebration of their golden anniversary at St. Clements Church, Lapaz, Iloilo City. Their children—**Rolando, Rogelio, Rodolfo, Joe Marie, Renato, Nepthali, Joefrie, Regie, Mary Grace** and **Paterno Jr.**—and the rest of the family members joined them in this special occasion.

The bride wore a gown designed by **Diane Travina**. Reception followed at the Punta Villa.





FERNANDEZ-MACAPUGAY

Michael Angelo Fernandez will marry **Christie Macapugay** on Dec. 23 at San Agustin Church. The bride will wear a gown designed by **Nilai Giray.**

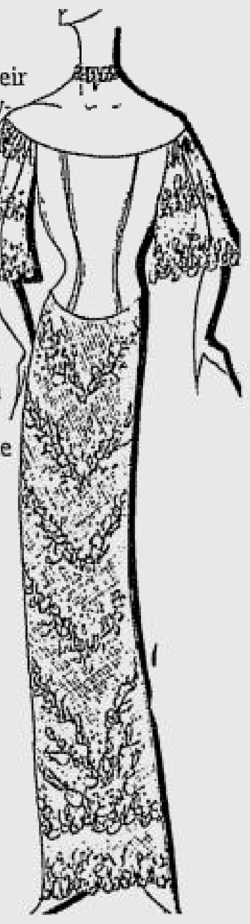
JAINGE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

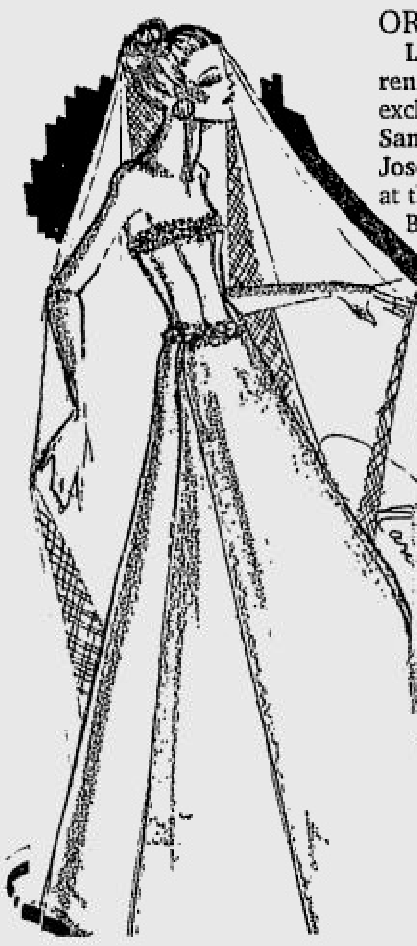
Dr. **Mel** and **Lita Jainge** will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary on Dec. 29 by renewing their marriage vows at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Church in Cubao, QC.

Eric Pineda designed two gowns for the bride. One has an off-shoulder bodice in silver-gray Thai silk with hand-embroidered piña bell sleeves. The same pattern is repeated on a fully calladoed piña skirt.

The other gown is done in silver-gray shantung silk with a sleeveless piña overblouse with caviar beads, faux pearls and rhinestones.

A dinner-dance reception will follow at the Palawan Ballroom of Edsa Shangri-La Hotel.





ORQUEZA-SANTOS

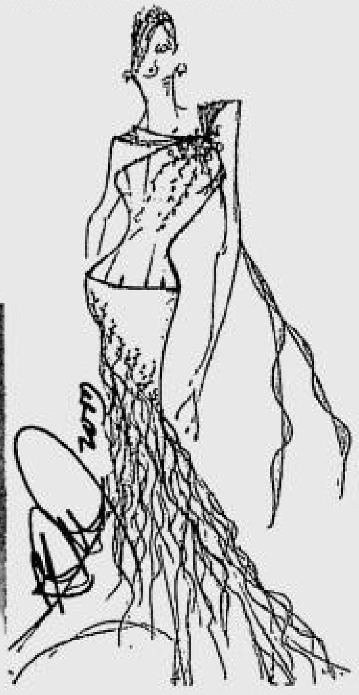
Leonard Orqueza, son of **Florencio** and **Lolita Orqueza**, will exchange vows with **Joal Ria Santos**, daughter of **Alfredo** and **Josefina Santos**, on Jan. 3, 2004 at the Archbishop's Palace, Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong. Reception will follow at G/F Philippine Stock Exchange Center Auditorium, PSE Center, Ortigas Center in Pasig. The bride will wear a gown designed by **Marianne Lazaro** of Wedding Plans.

FABIAN DEBUT

Ann Vanessa Esgurra Fabian, daughter of **Victorino** and **Arceli Fabian**, will celebrate her 18th birthday on Dec. 28 at Portico de Gracia, Cavite. She is taking up Preparatory Dentistry at Centro Escolar University, Manila.

CHEW-CAMPBELL

Elizabeth Chew, daughter of **Edward** and **Paulina Chew**, will marry **Paul Christian Campbell**, son of **Michael James** and **Deborah Jeanne Campbell**, on Dec. 23 at Saint Mary Magdalene Church in Cavite. Reception will be at Hardin ng Postema Resort. The bride and the entourage will wear **Paul Rex Mateo** creations.



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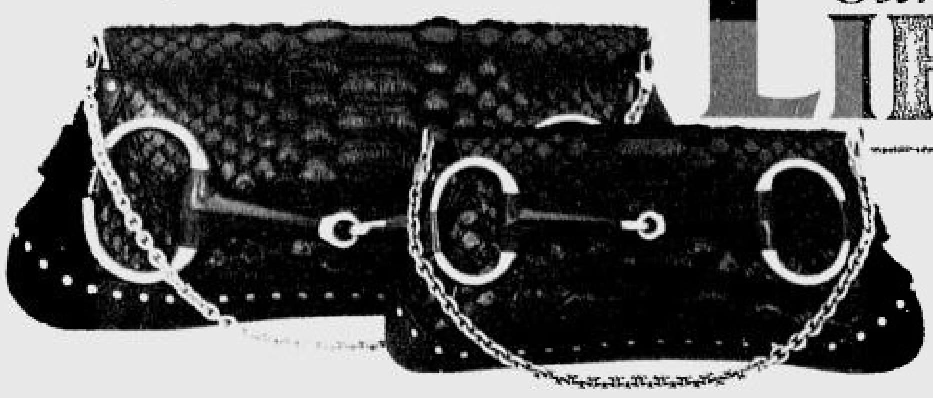
GUCCI bit bag



For feedback, text us at (0919) 880-3354 or (0916) 200-1160
or e-mail us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Here are our predictions of what's bound to be hot and fab this coming year. You read it here first!

Goodbye to all that, and welcome to the next big things

EVER wish you had the power to see into the future? Two years ago when I started this column, that was its aim, to try and bring you the latest in everything under the sun before it became part of cocktail conversation. Hopefully we are still on the right track!

T'NT TRENDS & TRENDINGS

Anton San Diego

This time around we are making fearless predictions (with the help of magazines and the Internet) of what's going to be hot for 2004. But before we do that, here's a short list of what was huge in 2003.

2003 what's hot list—LV Murakami and Gucci bit bags; "24" TV series; chandelier earrings; destination—Bangkok and Brazil; no-smoking bars (especially for non-smokers); **David Beckham** and metrosexuals; **Ben** and **Jen** (J.Lo to some); Friendster; Greenbelt 2 restaurants and as a hang-out; Hello Kitty; Listermint strips; yoga; "The Da Vinci Code" book; iPod; lychee martini; Philippine Tatler December cover **Nise Yabut Cojuangco**; President **Macapagal-Arroyo** running again; **Monica Belucci**; vintage; the terno making a comeback; "Finding Nemo;" Jelly Kelly bags; the launches of Gucci and LV; **Andy Roddick**; charity and invitational balls; FHM; Puma and Adidas; **Michael Bublé**; **Manny Pacquiao**; F4 (particularly Bench's image model, **Jerry Yan**, and the shirt he wore, which has sold more than 100,000 pieces); **Nicole Kidman**; the Atkins and South Beach Diets; **Saddam Hussein**'s capture; novelty songs such as "Mr. Suave" and "Ocho-ocho;" and the **Kris-Joey** on-again, off-again affair.

2003 what's "not" hot list—SARS; "Matrix 3" (a major letdown!); the travel ban, political scandals (Jose Pidal, Oakwood mutiny; the air tower siege); church scandals (Bishops **Yalung, Bacani, Buhain**, et al); **Paris Hilton** sex tapes; Bali bombing; Iraq war; **Michael Jackson**; numerous kidnappings; and the Kris-Joey, on-again, off-again affair.

Whew! If you think about it, this year was really hectic and nerve-wracking, but all the same, exciting.

As we inch our way to the new year, here's some of what we can expect (and, in the case of some, perhaps dread).

Familiarize yourself with this list, as I am sure you will see it here in TNT in the coming year.

2004 what's hot list—the elections; boy-toys (**Ashton Kutcher, Justin Timberlake**, etc.); more types of diets (check out the new

GOODBYE/J4

WHAT'S Hot in 2003—LV Murakami bag

Hello... Kitty.
With wings that light up when it rings and caller ID feature... it's the ultimate must-have this Christmas!

Why don't you gift gate this Christmas?

Time's almost up!
But it's never too late to give a Swatch watch.

Bag full of Benetton.
Chic and stylish Benetton bags... A gift that works 365 days a year.

So hip... so Swatch.
Shimmer and shine this season with Swatch Bijoux Love Explosion ring.

Make someone happy.
Golden Retriever Amber from Russ.

Play on.
Live the adventure... collect all 6 Lego Bionicle Rahkshi.

NOW OPEN!
- Gift Gate at the New Wing of Alabang Town Center and at The Shops at the Greenhills Shopping Center.
- Segue at SM Megamall Ground Floor Building A.

Russ Girl Powrrr...
Faux fur bags for you...
A set of 3 gifts in 1 at P275 is the perfect holiday treat.

The Swatch Christmas Raffle!
Get a chance to win any of these exciting prizes for every P500 purchase of Swatch, Swatch Bijoux or Flik Flak watches.
Raffle Draw: December 24, 2003 at 12 noon at Swatch Store Glorietta
swatch
The Gift Gate Group is the exclusive distributor of Swatch.
Starmony
Jingle Jangle Christmas Special Swatch watch

FRM DEC 1 TIL DEC 31 U CAN TXT AND TXT AND TXT

PAPAL Nuncio Antonio Franco, Belgian Ambassador Christiaan Tanghe and Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Delia Albert

NENA Villanueva and German Ambassador Herbert Jess

NETHERLANDS Ambassador and Mme. Robert Vornis and French Ambassador Renee Veyret

AMBASSADOR Enrique and Letty Syquia

Christmas concert caps ambassador's intimate soirées

DIPLOMATIC SWIRL

By Amiga

THERE they all were, sitting pretty in their seats, casually chic as the predominant mode of dressing required these days, applauding pianist **Nena Villanueva.**

It was a glamorous evening that Manila's music lovers have come to expect at German Ambassador **Herbert** and **Micheline Jess'** residence. The highlight of a series of intimate soirées hosted by the ambassador these past months, the concert being held in December was in a way a Christmas concert.

The program included Christmas numbers including an ambassadorial solo, Schuman's "Knecht Rupprecht," which is about Santa Claus handing out presents to good children and punishing naughty ones.

Ambassador Jess joined Nena in Mozart's Sonata for Four Hands in D Major while **Carminda Regala** and Nena collaborated on five pieces by Faure. Nena played Rachmaninoff's Etude Tableau in E Flat Minor, Prelude in B Major and Moment Musicale in E Minor.

Nena's playing of Andante Finale for the left hand alone, an arrangement from Donezetti's "Lucia," was a tour de force. The delightful evening was capped by Le Grande Tango for cello and piano with cellist **Renato Lucas.**

Welcoming a new wine

This year Le Club French Business Association of the Philippines, in cooperation with Auto France Philippines Inc. (exclusive distributors of Peugeot), invited members of the French community and Filipino friends to the Beaujolais Nouveau Wine Fest at The Tent in Fort Bonifacio.

LE Club president Philippe Gauthier; club director Christian Pequeux; past president Louis-Paul Heusaff; and club VP Louis Vergeon PHOTOS. BETOY JOHNSON

KOREAN Ambassador Son Sang-ha, INQUIRER chair Marixi Prieto and Alex Prieto

KOREAN flutist Shin Hae-won, Han Hyung-wook (wife of the Korean ambassador), Liza Naidas and Kwon Sae-young

In a setting straight out of Victor Hugo's "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," the courtyard of Notre Dame de Paris was recreated with **Chin Chin Gutierrez** as Esmeralda.

Lucky guests won a necklace with a South Sea pendant; an Asian cruise for two sponsored by Tour Spectrum; a chance to explore the French countryside in a Peugeot car; and two Manila-Paris-Manila tickets courtesy of Air France.

As you know, Beaujolais is not aged and is meant to be imbibed immediately upon opening. Beaujolais Nouveau is fermented for only about two months after bottling before it is sold and consumed.

The first produce of the Beaujolais vineyards is enjoyed worldwide at the same time in cafés and restaurants in France and elsewhere on the third Thursday of November.

Foundation's anniversary

Chaco Molina, director of Fundacion Santiago, took time off to celebrate the association's 10th anniversary at the Filipinas Library with a cocktail reception and a video show of their projects in social and cultural heritage development.

President **Pedro Roxas** spoke, as well as **Jose Maria Taberse** of the Agencia Española de Cooperacion; and Fr. **Joey Cruz,** dean of Ateneo de Manila University's history department; and government educational functionaries like **Antonio Asper** of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority and PMBA president **Oscar Castillo.**

King's Day

Belgian Ambassador **Christiaan** and **Gul Tanghe** threw a glittering celebration at their residence of King's Day and the 10th anniversary of the accession to the throne of His Royal Highness King **Albert** II. The champagne flowed and buffet tables overflowed with goodies.

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary **Delia Albert** did the honors for the country on stage with the Papal Nuncio, Monsignor **Antonio Franco,** toasting to the good health of the king.

THAI Ambassador Busba Bunnag and Sri Lankan Ambassador Ariya Rekawa

Korean dinner

South Korean Ambassador **Son Sang-ha** and wife **Han Hyung-wook** recently hosted a dinner at their residence in Forbes Park in honor of INQUIRER chair **Marixi Prieto** and husband **Alex Prieto.** Ms Prieto recently visited South Korea to observe media practices in the country.

Canada brings a raft of riches

CEBU CEBU

Jaime Picornell

THE EMBASSY of Canada and the Arts Council of Cebu presented Canadian pianist **Stephen Ham** in a recital held at the Sinulog ballroom of the City Sports Club.

Welcoming the guests were Canada's honorary consul in Cebu, **Robert Lee,** and his wife **Anna,** who wore a beautiful Filipiniana dress.

Arts Council president **Petite Garcia** was also on hand, leading the Canadian embassy's third secretary **David da Silva** and information officer **Chris Daniels** to their seats on the front row.

Stephen Ham came with impressive credentials and even more impressive good looks. That he is of Slovenian ancestry was evident in the fire and ardor he put into his interpretations of a well-designed program.

There were two preludes and fugues from Bach's well-tempered "Clavier Book," said to be the most flawlessly crafted piece of music ever written.

Then came Alan Berg's Sonata, Op. 1, and all 12 selections from Chopin's Etude, Op. 25, of which the first is "Aeolian Harp."

The recital concluded with Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 111.

Such was the enthusiastic applause and a standing ovation that Stephen obliged with an encore, a prelude by Debussy. He was swamped with autograph-seekers during the reception that followed the performance.

It would have been nice if new Canadian Ambassador **Peter Sutherland** came, as he wanted to, for this recital. But that day—Nov. 24—was the one chosen for him to present his credentials to President **Macapagal Arroyo.**

Two more Canadian events came up a week after Stephen Ham's recital. There was the McLuhan Forum on Media Trends and Issues held on Dec. 3 at Cebu Normal University in cooperation with the Philippine Information Agency and Skycable, which televised it that very day.

CANADIAN pianist Stephen Ham flanked by Canada's honorary consul in Cebu, Robert Lee, and his wife Anna

Speaker at the forum was **Luz Flaviana Rimban** from the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism and winner of the Canadian Embassy's McLuhan Prize 2003. She shared her experiences in a profession at which she excelled before a large number of attending journalism students.

Heather Forton, political counselor of the Canadian embassy, was in the panel, along with Consul Lee, UP Cebu's Dr. **Felisa Etemadi,** PIA's **Cherry Diola, Mayette Tabada** of SunStar Daily and **Ricky Poca** of Cebu Daily News, INQUIRER's sister paper here.

Next day, Dec. 4, was the second annual Christmas gathering of Canadians and Friends of Canada in Cebu, with some guests coming from the neighboring island provinces.

"We have 300 guests this year," beamed Robert and **Anna Lee,** who had worked very hard to make this a grand success.

Here for the occasion were the Canadian embassy's consul and second secretary **Martine Roquebrune,** and trade commissioner **Robert McCubbing.** They officiated in the awarding of certificates of appointment to primary and deputy wardens for Canada in Cebu, Bohol, Samar and Leyte.

Robert Yu and **Nemesio Garcia** are primary wardens for Samar-Leyte and Cebu, respectively. Among the deputy wardens are **Amy Encina** for Bohol; **Gladys Thielke** for Samar-Leyte; and **Lan Pfeil** and **Nonito Narvasa** for Cebu.

***

Wed at Cebu Cathedral with Iligan Bishop Monsignor **Emilio Bataclan** as main celebrant, were lovely **April Mary Tudtud** and **Richard Ramos.**

> The past days have seen a flurry of stimulating cultural activities courtesy of this city's many Canadian friends

She is the daughter of **Purificacion Luzon Tudtud** and the late **Edgardo Tudtud,** while he is the son of **Rodin Ramos** and **Aurora "Fanny" Ancajas Ramos.**

Dante Luzon led his niece to the altar where awaited the principal sponsors: lawyer **Augusto Go** and **Eloisa Fernan, Daniel Carpentier** and **Maris Araneta,** proxying for Department of Tourism director **Dawn Roa; Matias Aznar II** and **Carolina Casing; David Odilao** and **Marilu Cañizares; Edward** and **Norma Porter; Edward** and **Eleanor Hayco;** and Dr. **George** and Dr. **Pureza Oñate.**

Jo Ann T. Navalta was matron of honor, while **Rodin Ramos Jr.** was best man. Bridesmaids **Victoria Apurado** and **Josephine Vania Ramos** were complemented by groomsmen **Darwin Moises** and **Vincent Demecillo.**

Little attendants were flower girls **Ma. Christina Ramos, Vanicka** and **Vanessa Navalta;** pages **Simon Fernan** with the rings and **Vanrey Navalta** with the coins.

Attending to the couple during the rites were their secondary sponsors: **March Tudtud** and **Therese Manulat** for the candles; **Ian Sy** and **Jennifer Ramos** for the veil; and **Jon Jarantilla** and **Jasmin Lora** for the cord.

APRIL Mary Tudtud and Richard Ramos at the grand staircase of Laguna Garden. Her flowing tulle veil was held by a diamond tiara.

Close friends figured during the ceremony, like readers **Hester Amigo, Josephine Ramos** and **Cheryl Delfino;** psalmist **Jan Michael Banaynal;** commentator **Ma. Cristina Ramos;** ushers **Tina Rota** and **Malou Jolbot;** and offerers **Nimrod Quiñones, Melanie Villegas, Sally Onglatco, Carmencita Diola,** and Mr. and Ms **Pablo Ko.**

The La Mer Quartet provided beautiful music in the church and in the grand hall of Laguna Garden, where the reception was held.

Richard and April are making their home at the Mabolo ancestral home of his grandmother, the late **Lily Ancajas.**

AND TXT AND TXT AND TXT AND TXT AND TXT AND

Mag issue is about ties that bind

SISTERS Tessa Prieto-Valdes and Sandy Prieto-Romualdez talk about their in the latest issue of ME magazine.

Like opposites poles that attract, the Prieto sisters are different people drawn together not just by blood ties, but by the way they complement each other. Despite different interests and attitudes, Valdes and Romualdez provide each other support and are each other's source of comfort and inspiration.

Romualdez says her sister is a very positive person, remaining an optimist after all she has gone through. On the other hand, Valdes says her sister is very kind, consoling and charitable.

Aside from the Prietos, the latest issue of Me has other inspiring tales on family ties and what strengthen them. Me, a prestige publication of Mega Magazines & Publications Inc., is available in leading bookstores and newsstands nationwide. Call 6312859.

SISTERS Sandy Prieto-Romualdez and Tessa Prieto-Valdes

Be cashless but not joyless this season

SHOP, dine and pamper yourself this Christmas with the MTV Debit Card.

With the card, you can shop for clothes, shoes, bags, accessories and just about anything. You can even dine and party, get spa treatments, or have a holiday makeover.

Give your loved ones MTV Pre-paid Cards as gifts so they can experience the fun as well.

You can also get discounts through the MTV Debit Card, the first of its kind in Asia, from Apple & Eve, Cinderella, Dickies Jeans, Ducks Unlimited, Le Donne, Leaveland/B Club, Limited, Maldita, Scarlet Fashion Center, Silverworks, The Souk and Topshop, as well as freebies from BNY Hipshop, Lhasa and Mossimo.

Treats await you at Aruba Bar and Restaurant, Bargo, Bed Bar and Club, Bistro 110, Café Mediterranean, Cheesecake, Etc., Chef and Brewer, Piper's Wine and Bar Restaurant, Pazzo, Piu Pazzo, Ratsky, Sari-Sari Cafeteria, Sushi-Ya, T.G.I. Friday's, Whistle Stop, Bioessence, David's Day Spa, David's Forever, David's Salon, Island Photo, Odyssey Music and Video, Pacific Prime Communication Center, Photoline, Red Salon, Rever and The Spa.

The globally accepted MTV Debit Card is a cashless payment facility that is both purchase and ATM cards. It is linked to an Equitable PCIBank peso current/savings or dollar savings account and can be used in over 12 million VISA Electron establishments worldwide, and to make cash withdrawals in ATMs here and abroad.

Also available as a pre-paid card (E-Card XP), simply load a value or amount and enjoy the perks of the MTV Debit Card. No need for a bank account.

MTV Debit and Pre-paid cards are available initially at Equitable PCIBank branches in the Metro Manila. Log on to www.equitable-card.com/mtv

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD

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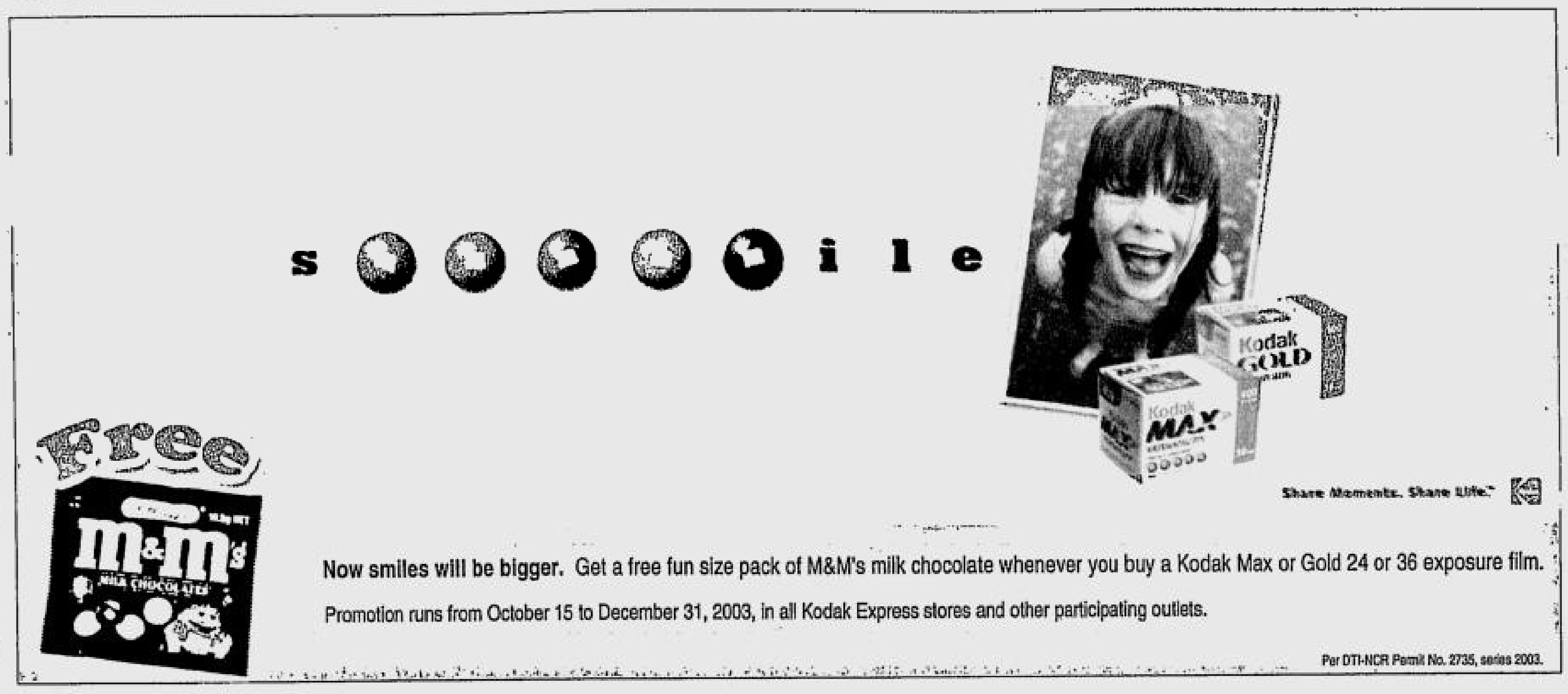


Now smiles will be bigger. Get a free fun size pack of M&M's milk chocolate whenever you buy a Kodak Max or Gold 24 or 36 exposure film.

Promotion runs from October 15 to December 31, 2003, in all Kodak Express stores and other participating outlets.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2735, series 2003.

The Shops and Sights of Christmas

Photos by Arney Nucum

All eyes are on the colorful Christmas Belen at the Greenhills Shopping Center

If there's anything we can say about Filipinos and Christmas, it's that we love our traditions. From misa de gallo, puto bumbong and bibingka, queso de bola, and displaying the parol, there are certain things that truly say "Christmas in the Philippines". For the longest time, the Christmas display in the C.O.D. Department Store in Cubao had been established as part of that tradition. With a vibrant array of colors, moving mannequins, and different Christmas themes every year, the C.O.D. display brought in hundreds of tourists ho sought a little entertainment in the midst of shopping during the Christmas season.

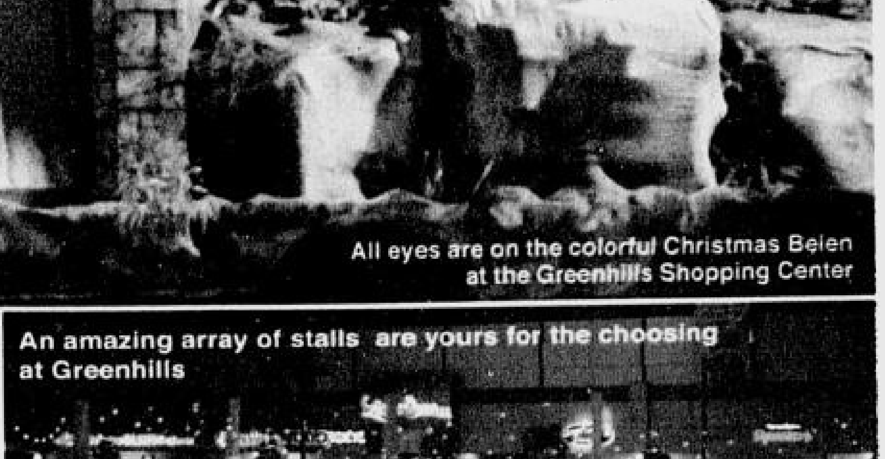
The good news is that the old C.O.D. display has made its way to the Greenhills Shopping Center! SMART Buddy is sponsoring the return of this well-loved tradition and updating it for 2003. With the newly refurbished parking area in the heart of Greenhills, you can spot the giant mannequins in a traditional Christmas pose. From 6pm to 11pm daily, until January 4, 2004, the mannequins magically come to life to portray the Christmas story of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

To coincide with the rebirth of the Christmas display, the SMART Shockwave is extending until December 31, 2003 in Greenhills and in SMART Wireless Centers and TSI Outlets across the land! The Shockwave in Greenhills is located at the 2nd floor Bridgeway of Virra Mall and will be offering the Nokia 3315 for only P3,790, the Nokia 3510 for P4,990, Nokia 5510 for P5,490, Nokia 8210 at P6,490 and the Nokia 8250 for only P6,990. For every purchase of a SMART Buddy Nokia phone, you get a free Buddy pocket radio and a Nokia celfone holder. Plus, for every Nokia phone you buy at the Shockwave, you automatically enter the daily raffle for a chance to win the SMART Buddy Amazing Phone!

Purchasing the SMART Buddy 64K Super SIM 2 has never been more enticing! Buy the Super SIM 2 during the SMART Shockwave for only P199 and get a free Buddy pocket radio! On top of that, if you SIM Swap to the SMART Buddy 64K Super SIM 2, you can win a "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" 2004 calendar!

Christmas traditions help bring Filipino families even closer together. The experiences we share only help to strengthen our family ties. SMART hopes that by sponsoring the Christmas Belen in the Greenhills Shopping Center, it not only brings back memories of Christmas past, but also looks forward to warmer Christmas memories in the future.

An amazing array of stalls are yours for the choosing at Greenhills



After the Christmas display has ended, shoppers are treated to a free movie

Advt.

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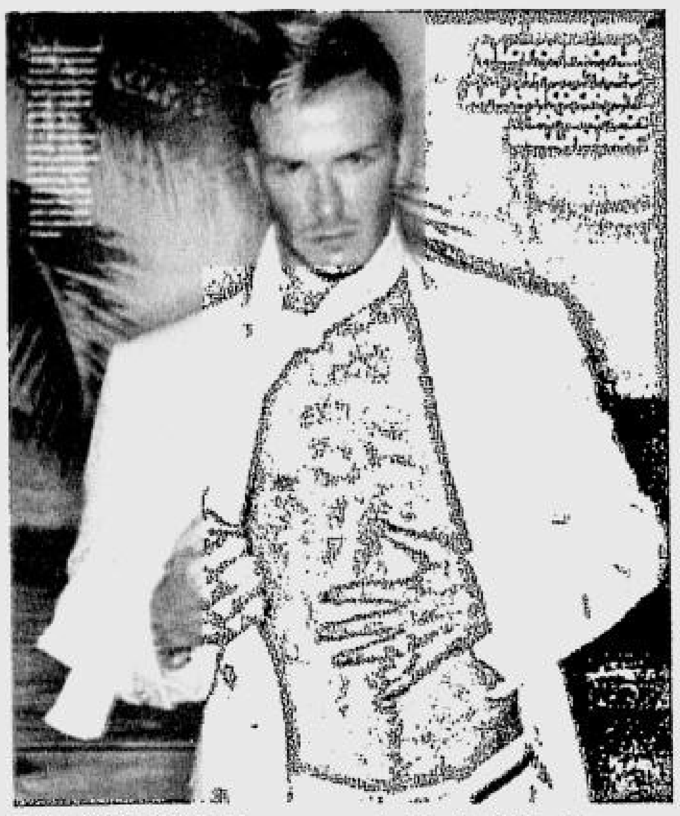
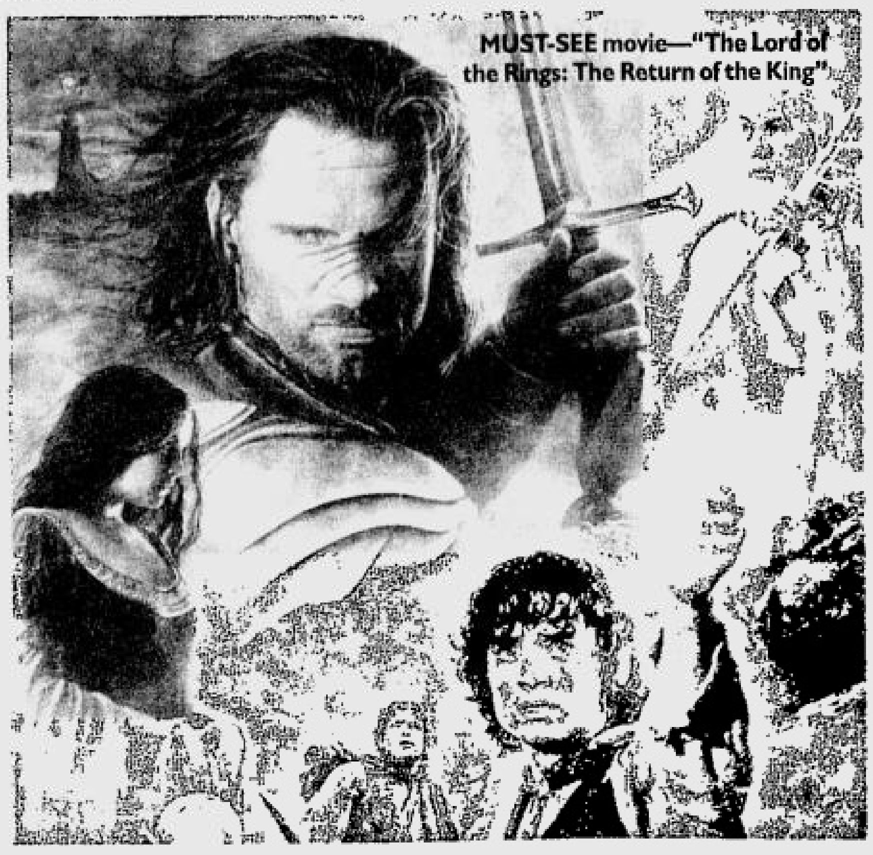


THE METROSEXUAL as represented by David Beckham



MUST-SEE movie—"The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King"

Goodbye to all that, and welcome. . .

From page J1

iPod
Playlists
Browse
Extras
Settings
Backlight
MENU

APPLE'S iPod

books "The New High Protein Diet" and "The Paleo Diet"); **Freddie Ljundberg** (Calvin Klein model, Arsenal soccer player); vintage fashion, particularly '30s and '40s looks (think **Marlene Dietrich** and **Greta Garbo**); after-yoga; belly dancing; **Gael Garcia Bernal** (the next big star, last seen in "El Crimen de Padre Amaro"); hot fashion colors (green, mocha, and caramel); **Jean Paul Gaultier**'s makeup line for men; and, who knows, maybe a Kris-Joey wedding?

Must-see movie—"The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King." Caught the last installment of the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy and, if I were to describe it in one word, it would be "awesome." The premiere night sponsored by Globe even had the President in attendance. She clearly enjoyed the film as much as we did.

Director **Peter Jackson**'s grand opus had everything, from drama, comedy, great battle scenes and mind-blowing images.

In a fantasy flick, it's so easy to get lost in the special effects, but here the characters (and the actors playing them), from Frodo, Aragorn, Legolas, Gandalf, etc., all leave an imprint on your mind.

This early, the film has been voted by the New York Film Critics Circle its best film of the year, which could push it to the forefront of the Oscar race. Be prepared to sit through three hours and a half of pure excitement. It's worth every minute!

Must-go-to karaoke place—Red Box Karaoke. Here's a new karaoke joint that's sure to be the haven of everyone out there who loves to sing.

Red Box is a franchise that originated in Hong Kong. It employs the most advanced song technology, a wide music database, professional audio-visuals (At last, no cheesy-looking models wading in the beach!) and the best microphones to make you sound really good!

I have always been a frustrated singer, so I have been to lots of karaoke bars. I must say that Red Box is a notch above the rest. The interiors, exquisitely done by **Ivy** and **Cynthia Almario**, are modern, contemporary and fun.

Red Box Karaoke is located at Greenbelt 3.

Flash! Flash! Music news. This is hot news and you heard it here first! Everyone's favorite crooner, Michael Bublé, is set to come back for a series of concerts in the latter part of January 2004. So for those who missed him (losers!) and those who want to see him again (winners!), check out this paper and column in the coming weeks for more details.

Essences Hot List. As we approach the tailend of frenzied Christmas shopping, I'd like to let you know that I have found a place to relax and do my buying in peace.

Where? Only at the premiere beauty paradise, Essences, over at Rustan's department store.

Whenever I go there, I am always amazed at the different products available. Scan through international magazines such as Vogue, In Style, Lucky, etc., and what's featured there can be found here.

So if you are looking for presents to give your cool, hip, fashionista friends and relatives, this is the place to go. Here are some of my top picks:

Hand sanitizer—Jao. It's simply the best. Once you use it, you will be hooked! The sanitizer contains lavender and tree oil and is not harsh to the skin.

Scents—Keiko Mecheri and Gendarme (both top sellers at Barney's), Annick Goutal and L'Occitane.

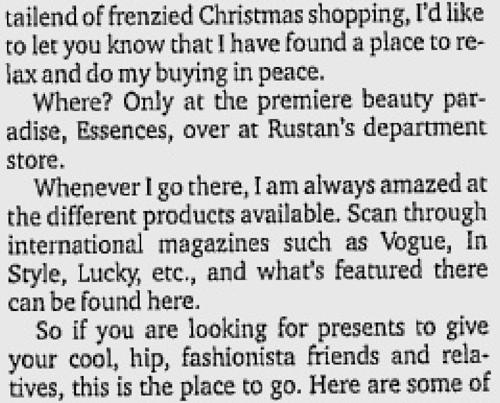
Makeup—Laura Mercier (used by **Sarah Jessica Parker** and **Julia Roberts**), Sekkisei (Asia's No. 1 whitening brand), Nars (used by supermodels) and Caudalie.

Other fab products include Essie nail polish, which is all the rave in the US, Baby Spa (for babies), Sundari (supermodel **Christy Turlington**'s beauty line, which is based on an Ayurvedic philosophy of beauty) and **Oprah**'s favorite toothpaste, Acca Kappa.

Lastly, there is one little beauty must-have: Dior's Trotter pouch. It's a couture pouch with Dior's makeup goodies inside. This pretty accessory is so coveted that supplies are flying off the shelves. Better hurry!

TNT would like to wish one and all a Merry Christmas!

E-mail the author at antonsd@philtatler.com



MUST-HAVE beauty accessory—Dior's trotter bag

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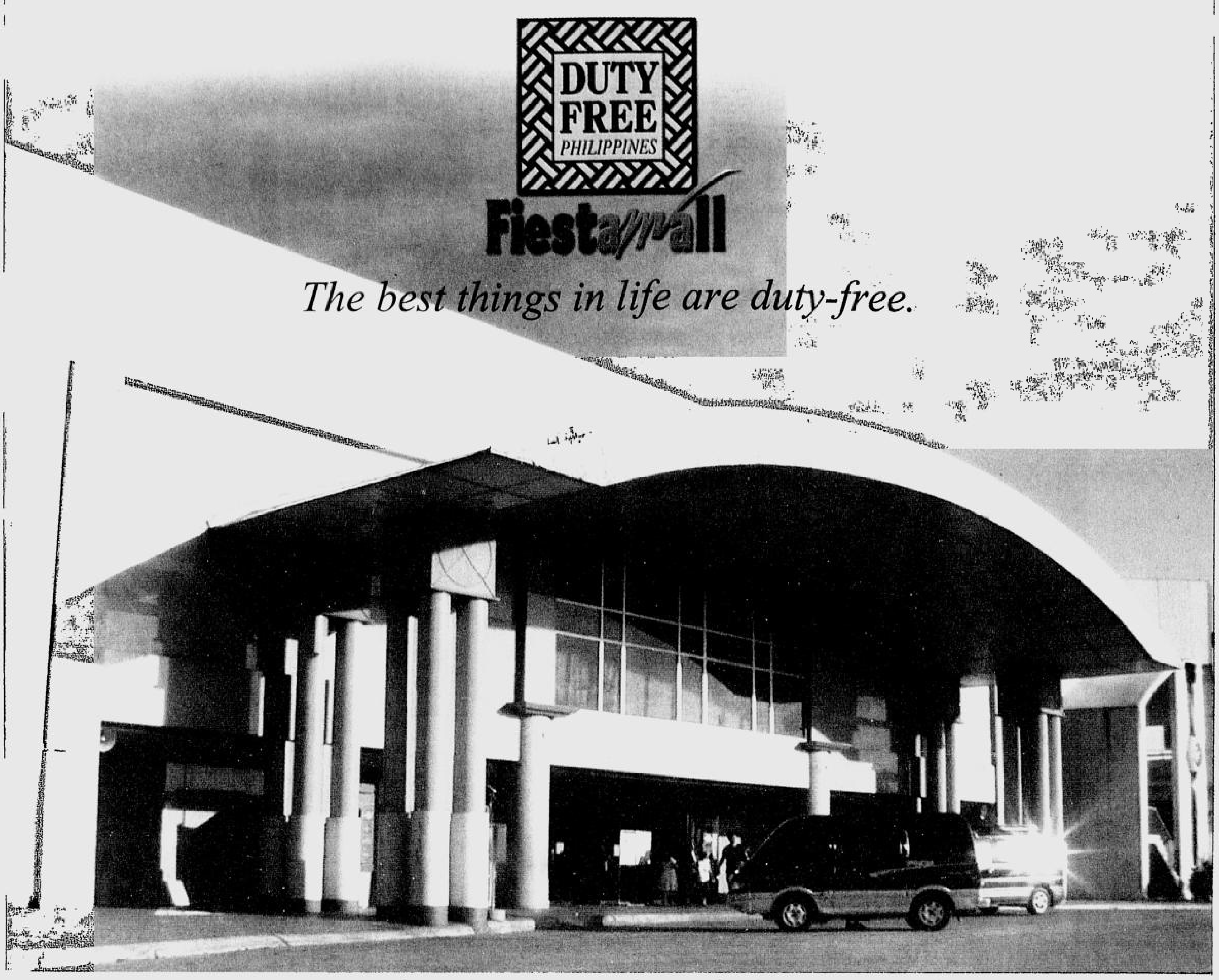


AT HOME WITH A WORLD-CLASS TRAVEL RETAILER

ELPIDIA O. LINTAG has not been to the Philippines to visit her sisters, nephews and nieces, for more than two years. The 54-year-old Lintag, is one of many Filipino nurses working hard in a Los Angeles hospital. She started working there in the 1970s and although she has become a US citizen, she still longs to be with the family she left back home. The same goes for 28-year-old software programmer Angela Cabrera, who has been working in Singapore for an American technology company for three years and has not seen her mother since she left.

Finally, the day arrived when they got the chance to go back to the Philippines, riding an airplane packed with other Filipinos brimming over with excitement. Amid the tears of joy at their homecoming, with hordes of family members welcoming them at the airport, they know there is one thing they have to do aside from eating real Filipino food - and that is to go to the Duty Free Philippines Fiesta Mall in Paranaque City for some serious pasalubong shopping. Never mind that they already came home laden with balikbayan boxes, the kind that Filipinos have become world-famous for, tightly packed with presents for their loved ones.

The homecoming ritual is just not complete without the trip to the Duty Free Fiestamall, where the family can choose another present for themselves, putting that hard-earned money from abroad to good use. This is perhaps the main reason why more than half of the people who visit and buy from the Duty Free Fiestamall are balikbayans like Lintag (Filipinos who have been abroad for more than a year) and Overseas Filipino Workers like Cabrera.

Duty Free Fiestamall has recognized that it has become a part of almost every Filipino family, thus, it does its own to help fulfill the Duty Free Philippines' mission to be a world-class travel retailer committed to satisfying the shopping needs of travelers, showcasing the Filipino traits of warmth and hospitality.

The Duty Free Fiestamall - located beside the Ninoy Aquino International Airport - is a 38,000 square meter building featuring state-of-the-art, shopper-friendly facilities with an extensive range of world-class products for the family to choose from. At the heart of the new complex is a two-story building with a 23,000 square meter selling area, almost three times bigger than the old Fiesta Shopping Center.

Pa-Auto
Pa-Pasko

It can easily accommodate some 8,000 shoppers at any given time, which is just as well as the Duty Free Fiestamall can be filled to the brim during peak seasons such as Christmas holidays. The Fiestamall's design is contemporary yet Filipino. An overall beige and off-white color scheme unifies all fashion houses.

It has ample parking space, and has about 60 cash registers for faster counter transactions.

The Fiestamall also has a food court with more than 20 stores where the balikbayans and OFWs can have their first bite of Filipino food after being away for so long, although there is enough variety to suit every palate.

There is a huge selection of toys and gadgets for children, electronics and appliances, home furnishings, fitness equipment and fashion items such as clothes, shoes and bags sold by international retailers such as Burberry, Hugo Boss, Elizabeth Arden and Estee Lauder. Another popular destination is the supermarket, selling imported items at reasonable prices and where variety is always a major attraction. Almost nobody goes out the building without the crate of apples or grapes.

Other popular items that fly off the shelves are perfumes, electronics, cigarettes, snacks, cosmetics and appliances.

Aside from the array of merchandise and the cozy shopping atmosphere, Duty Free is well on its way to achieving its lofty goals by introducing innovative shopping packages to get more people to shop within its walls. One of these is the Balikbayan Plus program, under which any returning Filipino who has been abroad for at least a year can shop at any DFP outlet up to $1,500 worth of duty free items within 15 days upon arrival.

The balikbayan is also entitled to the Kabuhayan shopping privelege worth $2,000 exclusively for the purchase of livelihood tools. DFP also designed a "shop now, pick up later" program for all outbound passengers of any nationality who will return to the Philippines within 30 days. The Travelite program offers a 7 percent discount on all DFP purchases, aimed at encouraging departing travelers to buy their duty free goods here even before leaving the country, and then claim the items upon their return.

Duty Free also caters to the shopping needs of the diplomatic personnel in foreign embassies, international offices, institutions and organizations accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs under its diplomatic sales, and to travel agencies and tour guides under the travel industry sales.

These efforts are on top of Duty Free's mandate to offer only the best merchandise for the buyers at the most reasonable prices. These efforts bode well for balikbayans like Lintag and OFWs like Cabrera, who save up for months for these shopping sprees for their families. And seeing the wide smiles on their family members' faces as they go through the aisles with their prized purchase is enough compensation for all their hard work.

It is at that moment that they realize that they are truly home.

Fiestamall

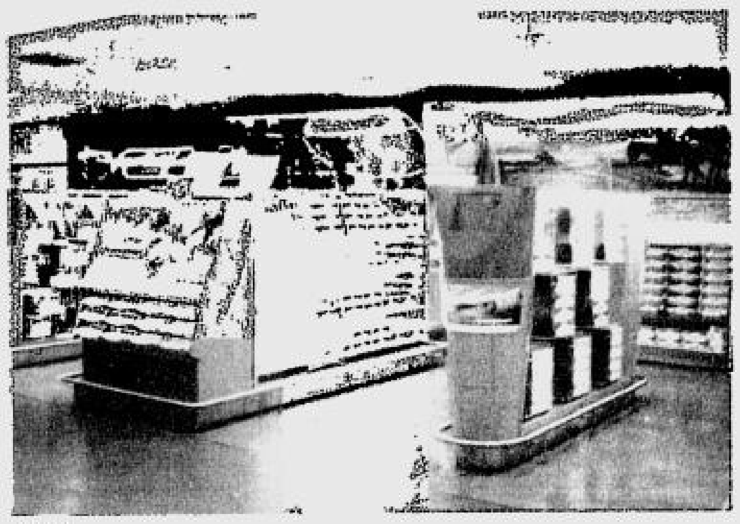
GREAT BUYS

Wide assortment, Big brand names

TASTING
Specialty Bar

Getting value for your money

CHIVAS REGAL



JOHNNIE WALKER

"Duty Free Philippines reaped international recognition due to our commitment to offer only the best in duty free shopping. We take pride in carrying only genuine products at great values. We guarantee you the world's best products at unbelievable prices!"

Michael Christian U. Kho
General Manager
Duty Free Philippines

Home to the Most Prestigious Brands

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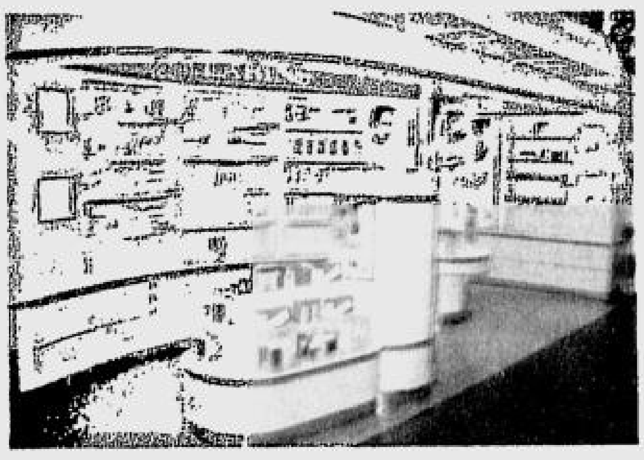
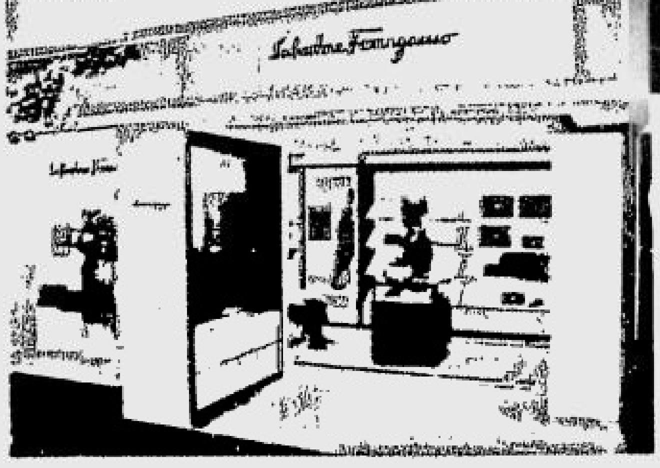
Christian Dior




Salvatore Ferragamo

Additional Benefits and Privileges Under New Balikbayan Law

The Philippines' Balikbayan Program got a significant boost from the country's legislators when it passed Republic Act 9174 last July 2002 amending Republic Act 6768 which created the program in 1989.

A Balikbayan is a Filipino citizen who has been continuously out of the Philippines for a period of at least one year from the date of last departure, or a Filipino overseas worker. Also classified under the Balikbayan category are former Filipino citizens and his or her family, who had been naturalized in a foreign country and comes or returns to the Philippines.

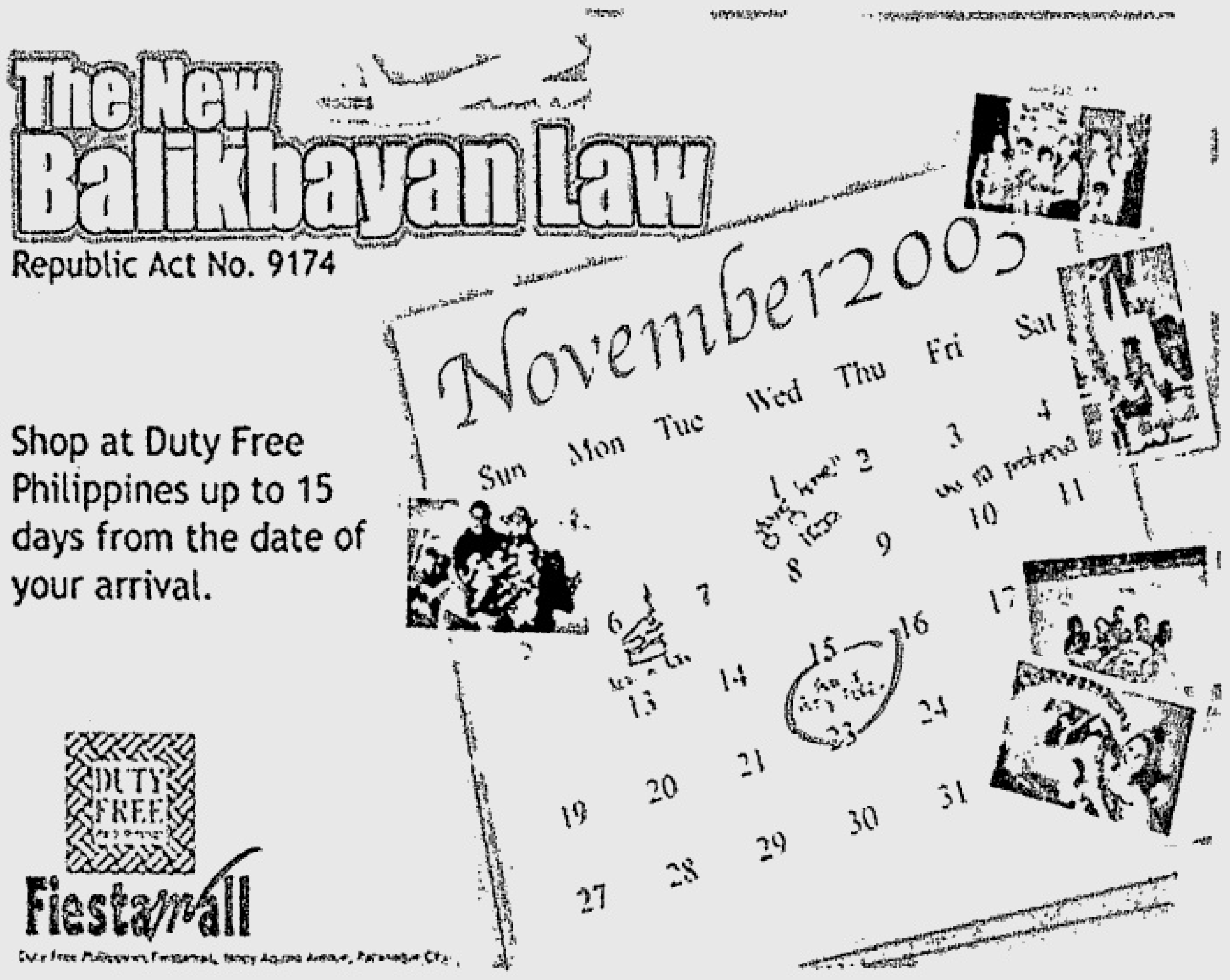
Under the new law, eligible participants in the program are entitled to the duty and tax free maximum purchase of goods at Philippine duty-free shops operated by Duty Free Philippines in the amount of US$1,500 subject to the following:

* Purchases shall be made in US Dollars or its equivalent in Philippine Peso and other acceptable foreign currencies by the Central Bank;
* Purchases shall be made with fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of arrival;
* During the Christmas season from November 15 to January 15, the privilege is extended to thirty (30) calendar days from the date of arrival;
* Privilege shall be availed of on a one-time shopping basis only

Senior Citizens and Handicapped Balikbayan are allowed to enjoy he privilege within one (1) year from date of arrival in the country.

The new law is a strong recognition of overseas Filipinos' significant contribution to the national economy through the foreign exchange inflow and revenues that they generate.

Duty Free Philippines Fiestamall is proud and happy to share a more convenient and relaxed duty-free shopping schedule to the Balikbayan.


The New
Balikbayan Law
Republic Act No. 9174
Shop at Duty Free Philippines up to 15 days from the date of your arrival.
DUTY FREE
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DUTY FREE PHILIPPINES
Pa-Auto Pa-Pasko
You can win a 2003 Ford Expedition or a P1 Million Shopping Spree!

Duty Free Philippines (DFP) pays tribute to its valued customers through its *Pa-Auto, Pa-Pasko* promo by giving away a brand new **Ford Expedition AND** a **P1 Million shopping spree** to two (2) lucky shoppers this Christmas season.

By simply shopping at the Fiestamall or Cebu Waterfront Hotel outlet, DFP's loyal patrons now have a chance to finally own a dream Ford Expedition and/or spend P1 million on all the best buys Duty Free Philippines has to offer (from famous name brands in chocolates, confectionery, wines, liquor, fashion, perfumes. cosmetics to a wide assortment of groceries and electronic items). Every $100 worth of purchases entitles the customer to one (1) raffle coupon. Two (2) winners will be drawn on the grand raffle set on January 30, 2004 at the Fiestamall. Winners shall be notified via the country's major publications and registered mail. Prizes are tax paid and not convertible to cash.

Aimed to entice international travelers to do their Christmas shopping at Duty Free Philippines and hence contribute to the upliftment of the tourism industry. *"Pa-Auto, Pa-Pasko"* was launched last November 23, 2003 and will run until January 15, 2004.

It's all about adventure...
The Marlboro Canyonlands Challenge Promotion

Marlboro
Marlboro

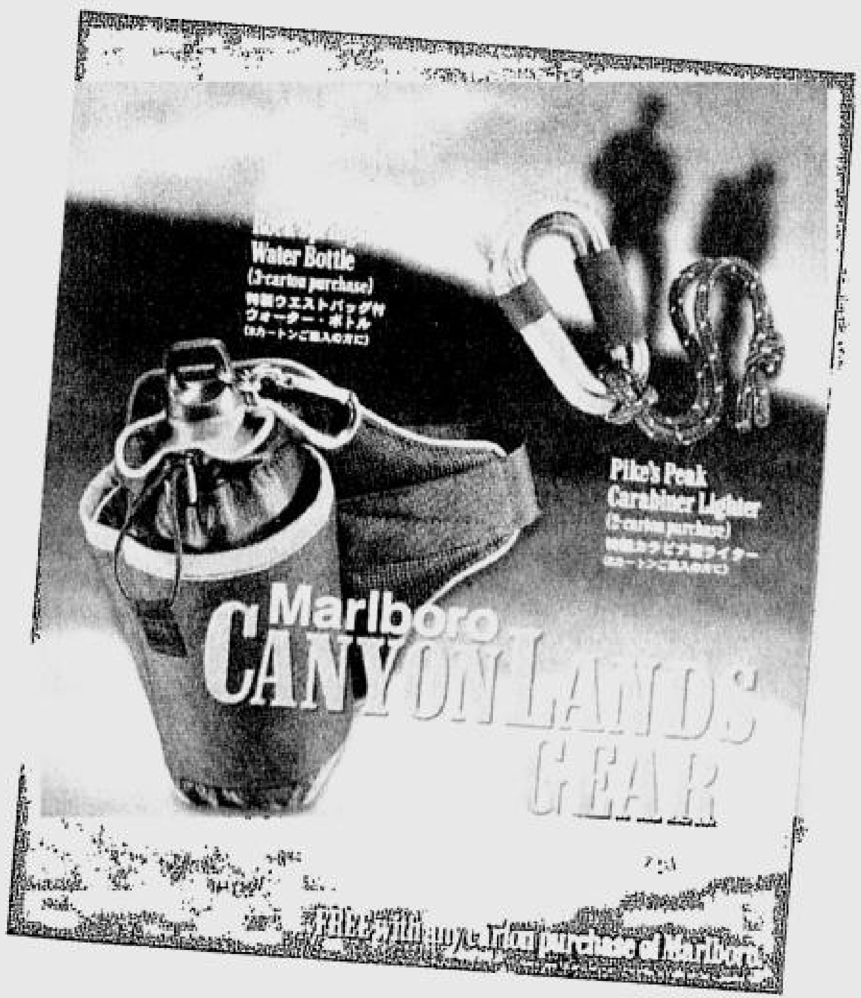
In the tradition of the Marlboro Adventure Team. Duty Free Philippines Fiesta Mall takes its adult shoppers to the same excitement of MAT that has captured thousands of adventure-seeking Filipinos through the Marlboro Canyonlands Challenge Promotion.

Canyonlands gear and gadgets made for adventure await Fiesta Mall shoppers this holiday season. Marlboro Canyonlands Challenge promotion is offered only to smokers 18 years old and above from November 10, 2003 to December, until supply lasts.

Balikbayan shoppers. Overseas Filipino Workers and travelers to the Philippines this Christmas season who purchase a 3-carton package of Marlboro will receive a Free Rock Springs Water Bottle, while shoppers who purchase a 2-carton package get a Free Pike's Peak Carabiner Lighter.

The Marlboro Canyonlands Challenge promotion packages can be purchased at the Marlboro booth of Fiesta Mall.

Whether it's the Rock Springs Water Bottle or Pike's Peak Carabiner Lighter, the Canyonland Challenge is Marlboro's way to welcoming you home!


Water Bottle
(3-carton purchase)
Pike's Peak
Carabiner Lighter
(2-carton purchase)
Marlboro
CANYONLANDS
GEAR

Government Warning : Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

Family Shopping at Fiesta Mall: Making A Difference

The year 1986 is best remembered as the year of the People Power Revolution. For the millions of international travelers and returning overseas Filipinos, it was also a year of excitement and delight as it was in the same year that Duty Free Philippines was born. For Jose Johnny Redome of Cabatuan, Iloilo, it was the year that would entirely change his life. Johnny, then 25 years old, left his sleepy hometown in the Visayas to work as a seaman abroad, driven by the need to support his family needs and achieve his personal goals and aspirations.

Seventeen years later, Johnny feels he has fulfilled his dream of being able to help his parents and siblings in Cabatuan. Today at 42, Johnny is a picture of contentment and has his own growing family for inspiration. With wife Elma Rita and children Jessa Marie and Johnny Jr. in tow, Johnny dropped by Fiesta Mall one morning in October, a day after his arrival from an 8-month stint in a tanker, for his usual fare of pasalubong.

"Duty free shopping has become part of my schedule whenever I come home," Johnny says. "It relieves me of excess baggage when leaving my port of origin knowing that I can buy my pasalubong for my folks back home here at Duty Free," he adds.

The giving of pasalubong is a common practice among overseas Filipino workers. Besides immediate relatives, overseas workers extend pasalubongs to their friends and neighbors as well. An overseas Filipino worker is looked up to by friends when coming home. With the pasalubongs, he is even more admired, loved and respected.

"This is my first time to accompany Johnny here at Fiesta Mall," Elma Rita explains. "With cheaper prices and plenty of goods to choose from, duty free shopping here is a delight," she adds.

"Liquor and cigarettes are my favorite pasalubong for my friends in Cabatuan," Johnny says. "Doing the rounds of the various sections Fiesta Mall makes me really feel I'm home," he smilingly adds.

Balikbayan and North Carolina resident Rosita Dujillo Carter, who hails from Lucena City, came to Fiesta Mall with his 29 year-old architect son Daniel a day after her arrival from the U.S. "Shopping at Fiesta Mall is a must for me whenever I come home for vacation," Aling Rosita proudly says. "We shop here as one big family", she adds pointing to her four sisters each with a shopping cart, who came all the way from Novaliches, Quezon City.

Daniel Carter was just amazed at how spacious and grandious Fiesta Mall is. "It's pretty good place to shop, and a lot of good buys too," he says. "It's like shopping at Walmart back home," he adds.

Going around the different sections of the mall, with smiling and accommodating sales ladies, I felt very at home shopping with my mom and her large family," he narrates. "At Fiesta Mall, you feel that much-talked about Filipino hospitality," he adds.

The experiences of the Redomes and Carters have made and continue to make Fiesta Mall a different shopping place for the entire family.

ENJOY US$1.00 DISCOUNT FROM YOUR TOTAL PURCHASE AT DUTY FREE PHILIPPINES FIESTA MALL!
SIMPLY COMPLETE AND SUBMIT THE SURVEY FORM BELOW.

Here's how you can avail of the US$1.00 discount:

Your total purchases at Duty Free Fiesta Mall must include at least one (1) ream of Marlboro.

Fill up the survey form and detach from the Philippine Daily Inquirer issues dated November 30, 2003 and December 7, 2003 where a Duty Free Philippines supplement is published.

Present filled up survey form to the Customer Registration Counter of Duty Free Philippines Fiesta Mall together with your passport and travel documents.

A Duty Free Fiesta Mall Customer Relations Representative will issue you a shopping card with the discount coupon.

Present discount coupon to the cashier before paying for your purchases to avail of the US$1.00 discount from your total purchases at Duty Free Philippines Fiesta Mall.

This special offer is open only to customers of legal age and is valid for one shopping card only. Only the first 10,000 customers who submit the filled up survey form can avail of the US$1.00 discount coupon. No discount coupons will be issued to minors.

Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female
Age
Occupation
Nationality

Which country are you currently residing? ____________
Number of trips to the Philippines in the last 12 months: ____________

Did you buy duty free items prior to your arrival in the Philippines? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Is this your first visit to Duty Free Philippines Fiesta Mall? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What will you buy at Duty Free Philippines Fiesta Mall? (please specify)

	Item Brand	Total Spent
Food/Confectionary	________	________
Electronics/ Appliances	________	________
Fashion/Clothing	________	________
Perfumes	________	________
Liquor/Tobacco/Cigarettes	___ ___	________
Others	________	________

We hope you have a pleasant time shopping at Duty Free Philippines Fiesta Mall.

We look forward to your next visit.

Thank you and MABUHAY!

Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

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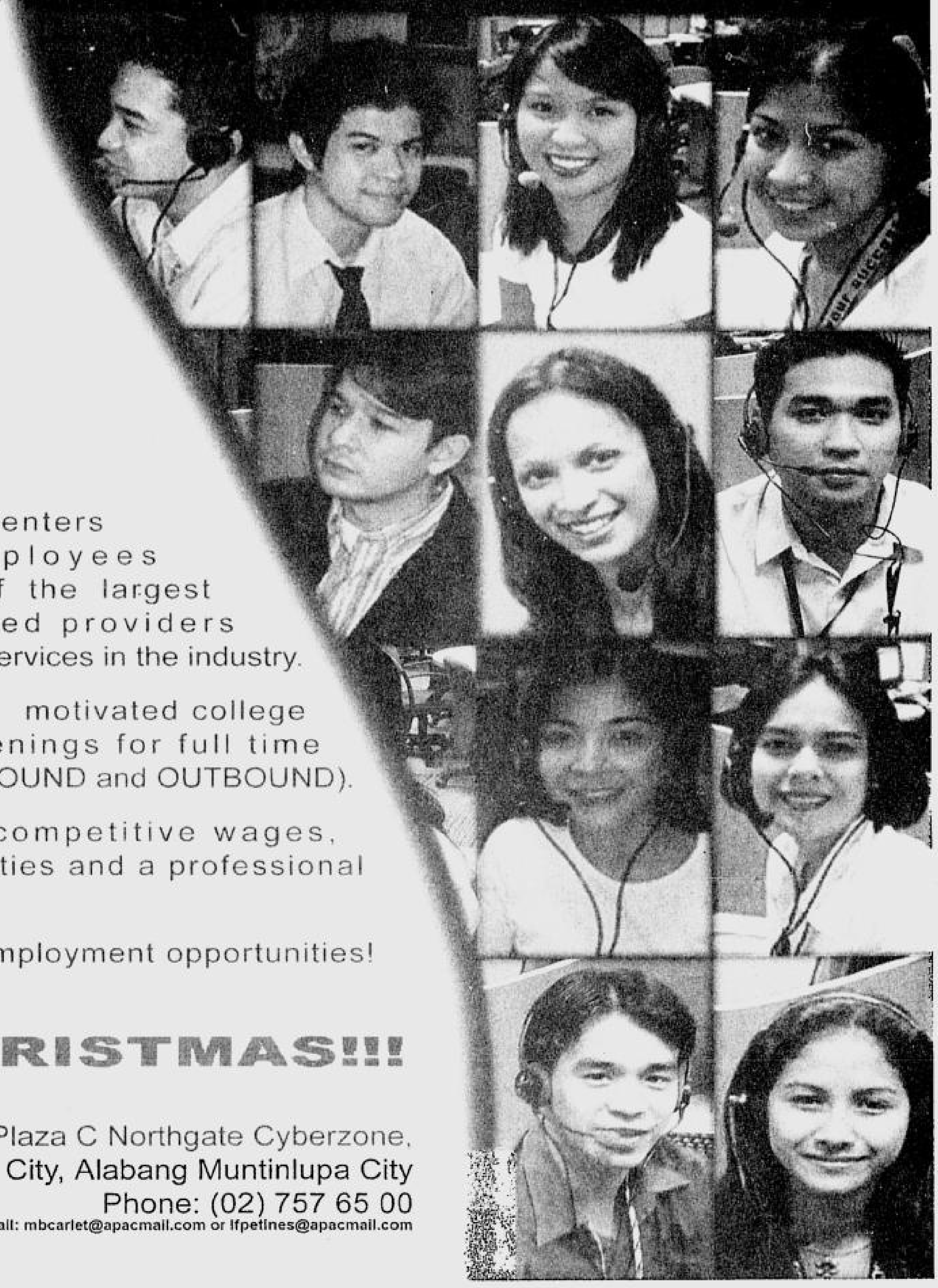

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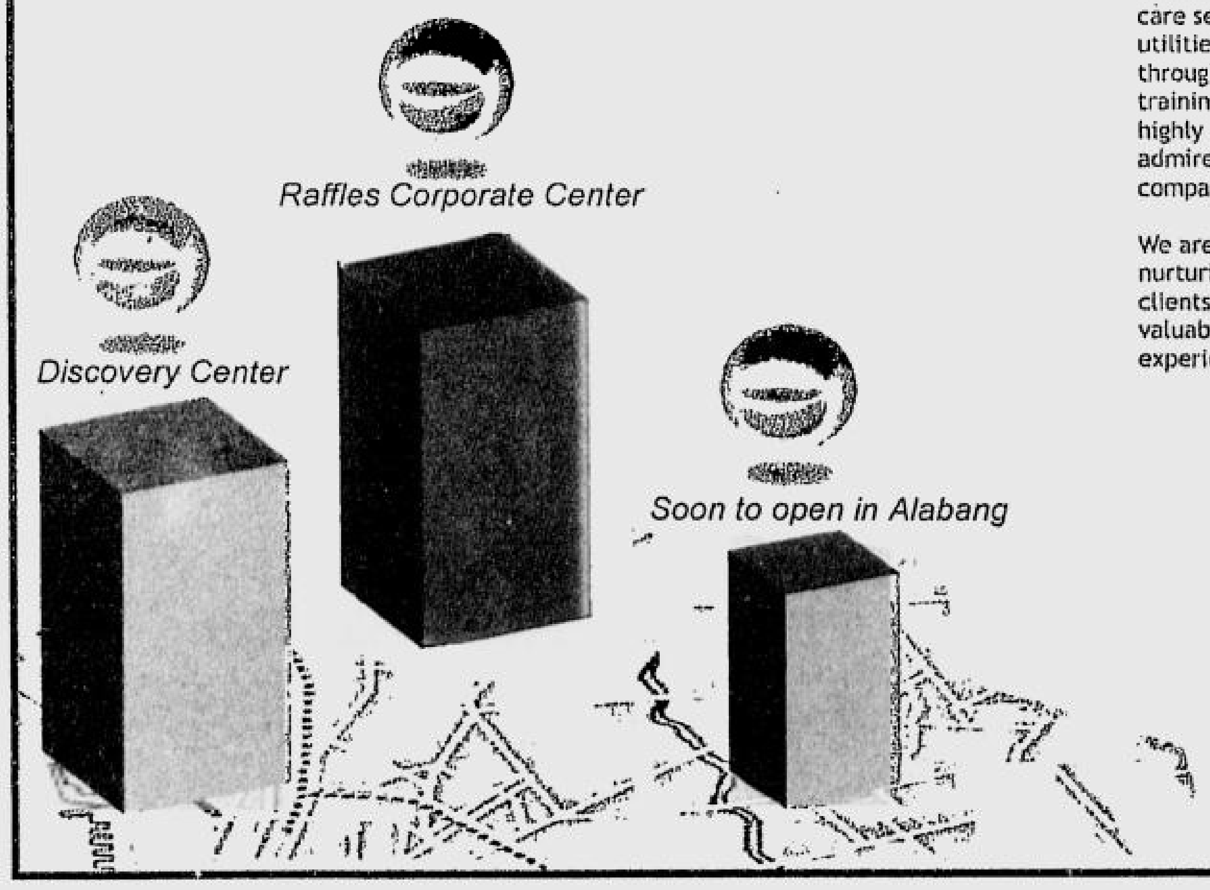

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Production Planning Manager

- Chemical Engineering graduate with MBA or MBA units
- Male/Female at least 30 years old
- With good communication and interpersonal skills
- Total work experience should be 7 years with 2-3 years of which in a supervisory position
- Experience in production operation, material and production planning, quality control, safety, sanitation, fire protection, and environmental protection is a must
- Technical knowledge and experience in ink manufacturing is preferred
- Exposure in formulating manufacturing policies, programs and standards, product costing/pricing, sourcing and maintenance of raw material stocks, analysis and evaluation of plant operations, its variances from standard/targets and institution of corrective measures is an advantage.

Accounting Analyst

- Accounting graduate
- With previous general accounting experience
- Graduate from reputable university

HRD Supervisor

- Psychology graduate preferably with Masteral degree
- At least 3-5 years experience as HRD Supervisor
- With experience in recruitment and training
- Knowledgeable in Labor Laws
- Computer Literate

UV Helper

- Experience in operating UV Machine
- College level

UV Coater/Sheeter Operator

- Experience in UV Coater and sheeter operation
- Team player
- College level

Assistant Printer

- Preferably 2 years experience sheet fed operation
- Fast learner
- College level

Guillotine Technician

- Experience in polar cutter operation
- Fast learner

Folding M/C Technician

- Engineering background
- Previous experience on operator of STAHL folding preferred
- Analytical/fast learner
- Team player

Saddle Stitcher Technician

- Preferably engineering background
- Analytical/fast learner
- Team player

Press Operator

- Male/Female
- Previous experience preferred
- College level preferred

Bindery

- Mechanical eng'g/EE/ECE graduates (not licensed)
- Male/Female
- Willing to work in industrial environment

Engineering Support

- Male/Female
- Mechanical/EE/ECE graduates

Pre-Press Technician

- Male/Female
- College level
- Previous experience preferred (but not necessary)
- Familiarity with MAC and PC and major S/W applications (Adobe, Corel, Macromedia)
- Background in print production preferred

DAD Technician

- Male
- College level
- Previous experience preferred (but not necessary)
- Familiarity with MAC and PC and major S/W applications (Adobe, Corel, Macromedia)
- Background in print production preferred.

Telephone Operator

- 21-28 years old
- College graduates from reputable school
- With pleasing personality and good communication skills
- Knows how to deal with different kind of people

Warehouseman

- Male / college graduate
- At least 2 years experience in warehousing

Editorial Assistant

- With knowledge of computer lay-out/ background of any computer program like photoshop/pagemaker etc.
- With communication skills
- Willing to work overtime

Applicants for all positions must be willing to be assigned in Mamplasan, Laguna (shuttle service available). Fresh graduates are welcome to apply.

Qualified applicants are requested to submit their comprehensive resumé, recent 2x2 picture and a photocopy of Transcript of Records.

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- Not more than 28 years old

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Accounting Manager
18th Floor Citibank Tower
8741 Paseo De Roxas, Salcedo Village
Makati City
Tel. No. 848-0231 Loc. 120
E-mail: hwangsh@kepco.co.kr

or at the address below:

MR. SANG HA BAE
Personnel Manager
KEPCO Philippines Corporation
Malaya Thermal Power Plant
Bo. Malaya, Pililla, Rizal
Tel. Nos. 674-5277 to 87 loc. 210 or 214
E-mail: dahkepco@yahoo.com

Deadline for submission: **22 December 2003**

A Start-Up IT distribution company in ORTIGAS CENTER is urgently in need for the ff full-time permanent positions:

Channels Account Officer

The candidate will be responsible for developing account strategy with the different IT channels through customer relationship management, sales management, opportunity management, and program management

Qualifications:
Bachelor's Degree in Management, Marketing or equivalent.
Required language(s): English, Filipino, Fukien
Preferred language(s). Any local Philippine Dialect.
Knowledge in MS Office applications a must.
Strong planning and Self motivated.
Excellent verbal and written communication skills
Ability to travel within the Philippines (for regional account)

Graphic & Web Designer

The candidate will be responsible for designs needed for its company's image including forms & stationery, products marketing material (posters, brochures) and its web site design and maintenance.

Qualifications:
Excellent knowledge of HTML, Macromedia Dreamweaver, Macromedia Flash, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator or Corel Draw or Free Hand
Bachelor's/College Degree in Multimedia Arts, Fine Arts or equivalent.
Proficient in Flash interactivity authoring (Action scripting).
Creative and design flair in designing complete websites
Team player and able to meet tight deadlines
Web & Graphic Artist must bring their portfolios in CD.

In-House & Customer Support Engineer

The candidate will be responsible providing after sales support to its channels and end-users. Participate in all after sales activities for clients. Field work will be required if necessary. In addition, he/she provides overall IT related support to the users at the office. Manage and administer equipment to maintain a sound technical environment for the operations of different business departments. Handles software and hardware implementations, System/ Network administration, maintenance and operation. Up-to-date software and hardware inventory; and IT operation and technical documents. Liaise with Software Developing Team on local user requirements and requests.

Qualifications:
Male 22-28, Bachelor's Degree on Computer Science / Computer Eng
Min. 1 year of experience in helpdesk, desktop and/or end-user support, Troubleshooting, PC maintenance and networking, network and server administration (NT, Window 2000)
Good problem solving and user support skill,
Strong interpersonal and communication
Able to multi-task and work in fast paced environment
Willing to travel to site occasionally and able to commit long working hours

Technical Logistics Personnel

The candidate will be responsible for ensuring the proper delivery of goods and documents, pull-out items, and collect of receivables to the customer. Possible to be promoted as Customer Support Engineer.

Qualifications:
Male 18-25, with professional driver's license
POSSESS ITS OWN MOTORCYCLE for the work
At least 2nd Year College student of any IT courses.
Familiar with IT/computer products.

Due to the **URGENCY** to fill up the vacant position, we will prefer applicants to email their resumé to **hason@mydestiny.net** or personnally bring in the **RESUMÉ** and **TRANSCRIPT OF RECORD** to 1606 THE TAIPAN PLACE CONDOMINIUM Emerald Ave , Ortigas Center, Pasig City for Interview. We will **WELCOME** applicants who can start immediately after notice of acceptance. Attractive compensations awaits successful applicants.

Department of Agriculture
Caraballo & Southern Cordillera
Agricultural Development Programme
A Programme for Self-Reliance

CASCADE

GININTUANG MASAGANANG ANI

ERP-CASCADE in its final phase of implementation wishes to invite highly qualified individuals to fill in vacancies at Nueva Vizacaya Office

JOB VACANCIES

Component Head - Agricultural Production Systems Development (DMO IV)

Qualification:
- Bachelors' Degree in Development Management/Agricultural Education or any related field.
- Three (3) years relevant working experience; 16 hours relevant training

Job Description:
- Over all planning, coordination and monitoring of the project Agricultural Component.

Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (DMO V)

Qualification:
- Masters' Degree in Statistics/Economics/Development Management/Rural Development or any related field.
- Four (4) years relevant working experience; 24 hours relevant training

Job Description:
- Assist in the over all monitoring and evaluation of the Project, as well as develop, review and/or update CASCADEs' Monitoring and Evaluation schemes/tools, procedures and reporting system.

Municipal Coordinator (PDO II)

Qualification:
- Bachelors' Degree in Agriculture/Engineering/Economics/Forestry or any related field.
- One (1) yr. relevant working experience; 4 hrs. relevant training

Job Description:
- Work closely with LGU counterpart, such as: conduct of trainings, preparation of project proposals and project implementation.

Technical Assistant Group – Institutional Development Officer (Level III)

Qualification:
- Bachelors' Degree in Social Science/Rural and Community Development/ Forestry / Environmental Science or any related field.
- With considerable work related experience in development projects.

Job Description:
- Coordinate with LGU counterpart, such as project LGU and partners' capability building, natural resources management, land tenure and indigenous peoples concern.

Technical Assistant Group – Agricultural Production Systems Development (Level III)

Qualification:
- Bachelors' Degree in Agriculture or any related field.
- With considerable work related experience in development projects.

Job Description:
- The agriculturist position takes cognizance of the activities to be pursued for Agricultural concern of the Project such as Agricultural Planning and Agricultural Production Systems Development.

Technical Assistant Group – Organizational Development Facilitator (Level III)

Qualification:
- Bachelors' Degree in Community Development/Social Work or any related field.
- With at least one (1) year experience in CO/CD work.

Job Description:
- Diagnose and provide assistance (e.g. trainings and coach-ins) to community water enterprises (IAs/ WUAs) in close partnership with LGU staff; prepare and submit periodic reports.

Micro – Finance Officer (Level II)

Qualification:
- Bachelors' Degree in Business Management/Economics/Accounting
- With at least one (1) year experience in Rural Finance Work (MFI/Credit Coops/SAGs)

Job Description:
- The MFO will be responsible in the strengthening of savings and loans group and rural finance centers, bringing them to a minimum standard level.

Financial Analyst (Level II)

Qualification:
- Preferably Certified Public Accountant
- BS Accountancy or any related field

Job Description:
- He/she shall review/examine/analyze office financial transactions and assists in the preparation of required financial documents.

Preferred candidates must be University/College/Professional degree holder in their areas of specialization, computer literate, possesses adequate knowledge in project management, with relevant rural development work experiences in foreign assisted projects and has a facility for both oral and written communication. **CASCADE** is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages women to apply.

The period of assignment is until July 2004. Interested candidates must submit their letter of interest, accompanied by most recent Curriculum Vitae to the address below, not later than January 5, 2004 via fax or email due to the urgency of the requirement.

Note: Only short listed applicants will be notified.

Project Co-Directors: ERP-CASCADE
Maharlika Highway, Bonfal West, Bayombong, 3700 Nueva Vizcaya
Email: cascade_erp@yahoo.co.uk Fax: 078 - 8053611

CASCADE is a special project of the Department of Agriculture funded by the Philippines Government and the European Commission

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JOB VACANCY

A Digos City-based reputable Japanese BRICKTILE manufacturing firm is in need of EXPERTS IN BRICKS, TILES AND OTHER CERAMIC PRODUCTS with the following qualifications:

With license in any of the following fields
– Ceramics Engineering
– Tiles Engineering
– Chemical Engineering
– Metallurgical Engineering

With Good Scholastic Record
Male or Female not more than 40 years old
With at least 2 years working experience in manufacturing tiles, bricks and other ceramic products.

* SALARY IS NEGOTIABLE

Interested applicants may apply in person or submit their complete updated resumé, application letter, Transcript of Records, Diploma, PRC License for Engineers, and other documents to:

The Personnel Manager
NAKAYAMA TECHNOLOGY CORPORATION
Diversion Rd., Cogon, DIGOS City

For more details, contact:
Tel. No. (082) 553-8702
Home page: Http//www.nkym.com.ph

WANTED for Employment

Junior Accountant

to handle record keeping and to produce various accounting reports for MIS purposes.

Financial Comptroller

to handle funds disbursement and other bank related transaction such as deposits, withdrawals, remittance, order payments and render timely reports on the same.

Submit your detailed resumé at:

P.O. Box 1731 Manila

TREND MICRO™

TrendLabs

Global Antivirus Research & Support Center | in America

Trend Micro™ Incorporated is a global leader in antivirus and content security software and services. Its solutions protect the flow of information on PCs, file servers, email servers and at the Internet gateway, providing a complete, centrally-controlled VirusWall for enterprise networks.

We are looking for top-notch, dynamic, and high caliber performers for the positions of

PRODUCT SUPPORT AND SERVICES (PSS)

Senior Product Specialist

(Job Code: PSS-CORE01)

Responsibilities:

- Deliver High Quality Solutions to Customers Quickly, Courteously and Cost-effectively
- Provide the highest level of Technical Support to our customers through technical expertise
- High caliber performers who will be joining our team in providing advanced Technical Support to customers.
- The candidate will be handling cases coming from Premium Enterprise Customers, Channels/Partners/Resellers as well as act as escalation point to our Level 2 support engineers.
- Will be working closely with software development team and Service Engineering Group in identifying and resolving the problem.
- Effectively interact with the engineering teams to provide solutions to complex technical issues
- Technical Training, Coaching, Mentoring
- Product Testing/Beta Testing
- Maintain and expand working knowledge of current Trend Micro products as well as their integration and methods of support delivery
- On Call , 24x7 Email and Phone Support, willing to be assigned on night shifts
- And other duties required as defined by management

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:
➢ *Technical Skills*

Specific Skills requirement:
The applicant can fall in any of these expertise:

(1) **Security Consultant/Professional**
  - Minimum three (2) Years experience on IT Security
  - Experience and knowledge in two or more of the following areas:
  - VPN, Cryptography, Public Key Infrastructure
  - Penetration Analysis, Information Security Planning, Security Policy Development, Intrusion Detection, Threat Analysis, Virus Control - Network Security, Operating System Security, Internet Security
  - Security Certifications a plus (ex. CISSP, SANs, GIAC, ICSA, etc)
  - Experience in Windows OS and Unix is preferred

(2) **Network Administrator**
  - Minimum three (2) Years experience as a Network Administrator
  - MCSE Certified for Windows NT/2000 or Linux/Solaris Certified Administrator an advantage
  - Working knowledge in any of the following Applications:
  - Sendmail, MS Exchange Server, Lotus Notes
  - MS Proxy, ISA, Firewalls (Checkpoint)
  - TCP/IP, WAN, VPN
  - Knowledge in FTP, HTTP and SMTP Protocol
  - Hands-on experience in Internet/ Networking environment, and client/server applications
  - Certification on the following is an advantage: SCSA/SCNA, RHCE, CLA/CLP (Principal), LPIC
  - Help Desk / Support Experience is an advantage

(3) **Network Programmer (good is C/C++)**
  - Minimum 2 years programming experience in C/C++ language Practical application of TCP/IP networking code is a must
  - Candidate must have a strong background in the design, development, debugging and implementation of network applications
  - Knowledge in Windows OS and/or UNIX operating systems
  - C and C++ Programming Certification a plus

➢ *Core Skills*
  - Must have a good command of the English language (written and oral)
  - Effective customer service skills
  - Able to manage multiple complicated assignments simultaneously
  - Self-motivated and a team Player - able to work independently
  - Passionate interest in IT and possess initiative to keep up with current IT trends.
  - Enjoys working in a challenging environment
  - Knowledge in software test automation or experience in software test tools development is a plus
  - Knowledge in Mandarin or Japanese is an advantage (written and oral)

Beta Test Coordinator

(Job Code: PSS-BTC01)

The beta test coordinator is the core of the beta test team. Handling the mundane items such as shipping, software duplication, product distribution, parts ordering, or other simple but time-consuming tasks, the coordinator allows other team members to focus on the important issues during the test. The test coordinator does the "maintenance" that keeps the beta test engine running.

Responsibilities.

- The beta test coordinator assists the beta test engineer in the gathering of materials for test, packages them appropriately for distribution, and then ships to the site. If the site has an issue or is not compliance, the coordinator must arrange to get the product form the customer.
- The coordinator must also monitor the cost to ensure that the department is using the most cost-effective methods possible. In addition, there are numerous laws and regulations involved with some products and their distribution.
- The coordinator must be versed in international software distribution and should be able to address issues quickly.
- Another important responsibility is the monitoring of testing progress and contract compliance of all beta test participants.
- The beta test coordinator also manages the countless administrative aspects of a beta test program. Procurement of everything the department needs and the financial duties associated, the coordinator acts as a department administrator to ensure that the needs of the team are met.
- The coordinator is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of a filing system for beta test documents, legal paperwork, NDA, and other important items.
- Once test participants complete a project, they receive a reward for their efforts. This reward is part of the beta incentive program. The coordinator is responsible for collecting information about the performance of each tester and then distributing a corresponding award.
- The beta test coordinator makes certain the testers have everything they need to perform the test. Contacting each participant throughout the test, the coordinator acts as a secondary liaison for the test.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:
Qualifications:

- Minimum 2 years experience of networking and web/internet protocols including UNIX, TCP/IP and NT.
- Minimum 2 years experience of one or more of the following systems - hardware structures, email, groupware networking and/or web based security.
- Minimum 2 years experience of Firewalls/VPN.
- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's/ College Degree in Engineering (Computer/ Telecommunication), Computer Science/ Information Technology or equivalent.
- Checkpoint Firewall 1 Certified or a similar Firewall/ VPN Certification.
  MSCE certified.
- CCSA, CCSE, CCNA or CCIE highly desirable.
- Checkpoint Firewall 1 Certified or a similar Firewall/ VPN Certification.
  MSCE certified.
- CCSA, CCSE, CCNA or CCIE highly desirable.
- Education or experience is certainly an important qualification for this position. However, the most. important for the beta test coordinator is follow through.
- Persistence is a key factor in being a successful coordinator. Test participants are often difficult to contact, unresponsive, or slow to communicate. A successful coordinator is able to balance the rigors of mundane daily tasks with the unexpected nature of a development schedule.
- The coordinator mixes skills of a department administrator and project manager. The coordinator should have customer service focus, experience working with the public and excellent communication skills.
- 7 Full-Time positions available.

INFORMATION SERVICES (IS)

IS Director

(Job Code: IS-ISD01)

Responsibilities:

- Manages the internal information systems functions, including applications, networks, and computer operations.
- Leads the team in analyzing the needs of functional departments in regional level and establishing priorities for feasibility studies, system design and implementation to develop and/or modify the business process and information processing systems.
- Coordinates with functional departments involved in system requirements, technical and project management.
- Co-work with corporate IS departments to feedback to the global team, and ensure the compliance of global disciplines/polices, and deployment of global services.
- Selects, develops and evaluates personnel to ensure the efficient operation of the functions.
- Defines and manages department performance metrics to align with business objectives.

Desired experiences

- 10 years in the IS/IT industry with at least 5 years in the management postion.
- In-depth understanding of business operation (both front and back-office).
- Familiar with both application services (ERP, SFA, etc.) and network infrastructure.
- Hands-on experience in project management and system deployment.
- Good verbal and written English communication skills.

Candidates must possess a **Masters Degree in Computer Science, Information Systems, Information Engineering** or other related discipline.

Senior Developer

(Job Code: IS-SD02)

The Business Process Team Technical Engineer will be the role in implementing the technical IT project. The Technical Engineer must be an excellent communicator with strong technical background and enterprise system architecture design, analysis. Implementation skill with good schedule management and team leadership. The technical Engineer will be doing technical specification design, managing program development or technical implementation project, project output quality, monitoring development schedule, coordinating between developer team, QA, IT and project management. Technical Engineer must be experienced in Software development cycle and risk management.

1. Creating high level technical design for the projects and identify technology platforms for the solution
2. Working with Project Manager to identify and review technical resource allocation and project scheduling in different project
3. Effective coordination and guidance to technical teams on large scale and different projects
4. Creating and improving application development processes
5. Technical evaluation and recommendation of vendors6. Work closely with Business Analyst(s) and Architect(s) to ensure successful project implementation.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's/ College Degree in Engineering (Electrical/ Electronic), Computer Science/Information Technology or equivalent.
- Required skill(s): C/C++, C#, ASP.NET, ADO.NET, Java
- Preferably skill(s): Siebel, Oracle, MS SQL.
- Must have at Least 5 years+ working experience in the IT industry.
- Must have experience in programming, software architecture design, EAI or enterprise application package implementation such as Siebel, PeopleSoft, Oracle, etc.
- Familiar with Siebel System (2000 or 7.x) is a plus.

REQUIRED SKILLS

- Must have experience with program development by using the following programming language: C/ C++, Java, C#, ADO.NET, ASP.NET
- Must have experience creating SQL statement in either Oracle or MS SQL Server
- Participated in enterprise application package project implementation, configuration or development
- Minimum of 5 years experience in the software industry.

DESIRED SKILLS

- Development experience with BizTalk, Microsoft Content Management Server, SharePoint Portal, CRM, ERP or Enterprise application EAI technologies. Experience in developing/ testing software projects on Siebel or Applix platform is highly desirable.
- Hands-on experience in database (SQL) development
- Hands-on experience in establishing test infrastructure and test automation.
- Experience in UML, XML, XML Schema, Web Services, Database, Data and
- At least 1 year+ working experiences as Siebel configurator or development engineer.Application Integration.
- Demonstrate ability to assess new technologies and recommend solution.
- Must have excellent communication, writing and presentation skills
- Demonstrated ability to deliver product under extreme tight development schedule.
- Preferably supervisor / 5 yrs & up experienced employees specializing in IT/Computer - Software or equivalent.
- Required language(s): English, Filipino
- Applicants must be willing to work in Quezon City.
- Applicants should be Filipino citizens or hold relevant residence status.

Integration Technical Manager

(Job Code: IS-ITM03)

This person has three major roles

1. He will have firm wide responsibilities (control the design quality and roadmap): Information, Integration and Interactions (Database. User Interface and Middleware) He will be doing the Business application architecture and integration roadmap, developing standards and processes, publishing standards, audit and review the design and looking to the future of Technology
2. He will be working with the Technical Team, QA Team and project manager locally in doing System integration and Application Architecture design. He will help the teams come to the right decisions and approach on how to integrate system, ensure system performance, security and reliability are good. This is Microsoft Technologies (.NET, VB, ASP, C, C#.Net, Exchange, SharePoint, CMS, BizTalk, MSMQ, SQL Server), Siebel and the other business systems
3. Working with the other region Enterprise IT Architecture to look at a broader perspective. This is more of a consultation role making sure all the areas are the correct approach and everyone is on the same page from an enterprise perspective.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's/ College Degree or Post Graduate Diploma / Master's Degree in Engineering (Computer/ Telecommunication), Computer Science/ Information Technology or equivalent.
- Preferably skill(s): .NET, VB, ASP, C, C# Net, Exchange, SharePoint, CMS, BizTalk, MSMQ, SQL Server), Siebel and the other business systems
- 10+ years of work experience in information technology with strong Technical Architecture skills, leadership skills, interpersonal skills.
- Experience in designing, implementing and building enterprise level business system architecture and integration.
- Experience with development lifecycle, peer review process, business system integration and CMM process is a plus.
- Previous experience working on Siebel Call center/ CRM, Biztalk, CMS, Intranet or EAI is also a plus.
- People management or configuration management experience is a plus.
- Applicants must be willing to work in Quezon City.
- Applicants should be Filipino citizens or hold relevant residence status.
- Preferably assistant manager / managers specializing in IT/Computer - Software or equivalent.

Information Services – Quality Assurance Engineer

(Job Code: IS-QAE04)

This person has four major roles

1. He will be responsible for testing business process software applications. This responsibility will involve:
   - Designing test strategy
     Developing test plans
     Executing test plans
     Reporting issues
     Improving test processes
     Providing information on system enhancements.
2. He will be responsible for training and assigning testing workload to part-time testers who will perform the actual testing. He will need to monitor the progress of the testers and coach them with regards to the system under test
3. He will be responsible for communicating the status of the system under test to upper management. He needs to make sure that the defect tracking system is updated and that the development team is aware of the defect to be fixed.
4. He will be responsible for writing test automation scripts or checking the automation scripts written by other testers.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's/ College Degree in Engineering (Computer/ Telecommunication), Computer Science/ Information Technology or equivalent.
- Preferably skill(s): WinRunner, Visual Test.
- Required language(s): English, Filipino
- At least 3 year(s) of working experience in the related field is required for this position.
- Applicants must be willing to work in Quezon City.
- Applicants should be Filipino citizens or hold relevant residence status.
- Control/Assurance/Inspection or equivalent.
- Full-Time positions available

DESIRED EXPERIENCES AND SKILLS

- 3+ years of work experience in software testing with strong process-oriented skills, writing skills and interpersonal skills.
- Experience in planning software testing, designing test cases, writing test specifications and performing actual tests.
- Demonstrated leadership ability, must have managed a test team of at least 3 people.
- Demonstrated communication ability; must have handled reporting to other non-testing groups regarding testing status.
- Experience with Test Automation tools such as WinRunner, Visual Test, etc. is greatly desired.
- Experience with defect tracking software is greatly desired. Experience with software development lifecycle, business system integration and CMM process is a plus.
- Self starter, works well independently and in a team

Japanese Speaking IT Engineers

(Job Code: JIT05)

Primary Job Functions:

- Provides intermediate level information systems support to ensure infrastructure availability and performance targets are met
- Test/review security settings of all linux OS & services including apache, sendmail, bind etc...
- Monitor the router performance & safety
- Maintain TDSC firewall & VPN integrity.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:
Minimum Qualifications

- BS. graduate of an IT related course (preferably Computer Science or Computer Engineering)
- Experience in network administrator is a must
- Must have good command of the Japanese Language
- Certification in any of the following will be an advantage.
  CNE/MCP/MCSE/MCSE+I
- Applicants MUST be willing to be assigned on a 24/ 7 shifting scheule.

Operating Systems & Server Software
Must be proficient in:

- Windows NT/2000, 95/98, MS Exchange, MS Proxy, MS IIS
- Office 97/2000 Suite
- Firewall-1,VPN-1
- Linux Sendmail, DNS server for Linux / BIND

Networking
Must be proficient in:

- Networking in a Microsoft TCP/IP environment
- Networking in a Linux TCP/IP
- Basic Cisco Router configuration & Management, Basic Routing protocols

ANTIVIRUS DEPARTMENT

Antispam Group – Quality Assurance Engineer

(Job Code: AV-AS01)

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBLITIES

- Responsible for writing test automation scripts or checking the automation scripts written by other QAs
- Responsible for writing tools needed for daily operations
- Responsible for AntiSpam Product Testing
- Responsible for the analysis and documention of new techniques of Spam mails
- Effectively present information to management team and to define, analyze and solve problem

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's/ College Degree in Engineering (Computer/ Telecommunication), Computer Science/ Information Technology or equivalent.
- Preferably skill(s): MS Exchange, Lotus Notes, SMTP.
- Required language(s): English, Filipino
- At least 2 year(s) of working experience in the related field is required for this position.
- Applicants must be willing to work in Quezon City.
- Applicants should be Filipino citizens or hold relevant residence status.
- Knowledge in Email systems (i.e. MS Exchange, Sendmail, Lotus Notes and etc.)
- Knowledge in Email Protocols (i.e. MIME, RFC822, SMTP, POP3 and etc.)
- At least 2 years of QA experience with Windows application using automated tools and manual testing
- QA Experience with Linux application using automated tools and manual testing is a PLUS
- Perl, VB, Dos Batch Files and etc.
- Must have good command of the English language
- Knowledgeable in computer networking

Antispam Group - Foreign Language Rule Editor

(Job Code: AV-AS 02)

General Job Description:

- Assist antivirus engineers via phone, chat and email
- Support customers on inquiry related to assigned project
- Proofread and check submitted solutions before deployment to customers
- Conduct quality assurance testing and monitoring of automated systems
- Generate and maintain reports on a daily, weekly and monthly basis
- Gather data on special tasks assigned

Specific Responsibility:

- Foreign Language AntiSpam Rule Editor
- Create English and Foreign Language Antispam rules to be integrated with Trend Micro Products
- Participate in other AntiSpam related activities
- Assist antivirus engineers during virus outbreak
- Support internal customers on Spam related inquiry

Desired Skills:

- Native speaker of German OR Spanish OR French with Read and Write ability
- Internet Surfing
- Email
- Knowledge in the following is a plus:
- HTML Knowledge
- Computer Networking
- Computer Programming, eg. VB, Perl

Antispam Group – Associate Engineer

(Job Code: AV-AS03)

General Job Description:

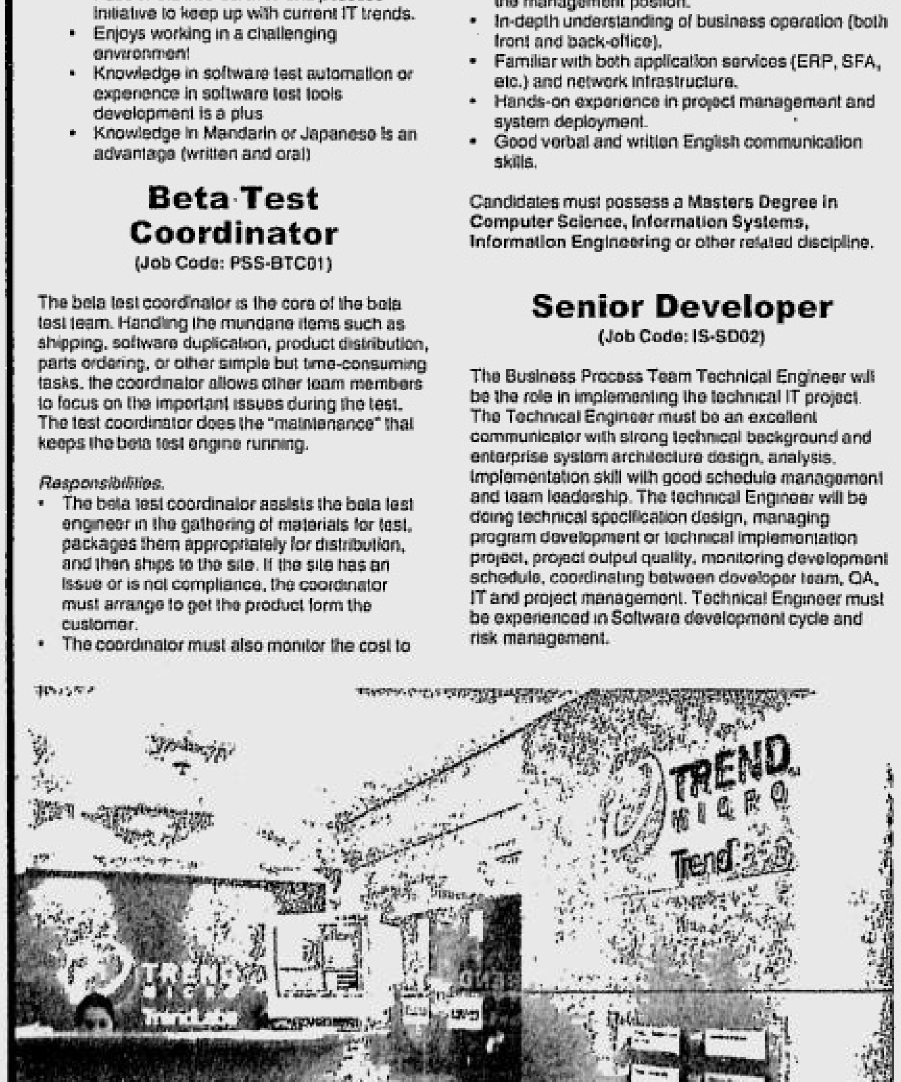
- Assist antivirus engineers via phone, chat and email
- Support customers on inquiry related to assigned project
- Proofread and check submitted solutions before deployment to customers
- Conduct quality assurance testing and monitoring of automated systems
- Generate and maintain reports on a daily, weekly and monthly basis
- Gather data on special tasks assigned

Specific Responsibility: AntiSpam Rule Editor

- Create Antispam rules to be integrated with Trend Micro Products
- Participate in other AntiSpam related activities
- Assist antivirus engineers during virus outbreak
- Support internal customers on Spam related inquiry

Desired Skills:

- Internet Surfing
- Email
- Knowledge in the following is a plus:
- Proficiency in Foreign languages (Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, French and etc.)
- HTML Knowledge
- Computer Networking
- Computer Programming, eg VB, Perl



Kindly email your resumé (in Word Format) to recruitment@trendmicro.com.ph or recruitment@support.trendmicro.com. In the event that you meet the minimum qualifications of the position that you are applying for, you shall be contacted the soonest.

Visit our URL at:
www.trendmicro.com
Free scan: http://housecall.antivirus.com

Philam Equitable Life Assurance Company

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Build your career in the dynamic world of Bancassurance!

Do you dream of becoming a respected professional, working for a dynamic company which aims to provide financial solutions using world class insurance and investment products?

Are you looking for a career that pays for results and offers excellent promotional opportunities?

Do you search for the challenge and reward of a sales environment but seek the stability of regular employment?

All these await you at PELAC.

Financial Sales Executive (FSE)

We are looking for dedicated and enthusiastic self-starters who will be tasked to identify needs and recommend financial solutions to the customers of Equitable PCI Bank, our strategic partner

Qualifications

- Graduate of any College Course
- Focused, customer-driven and results oriented
- Professional sales experience preferred, particularly in the financial services industry
- With pleasing personality and good communication skills
- Proficiency in Fookien and Mandarin a distinct advantage

Area Manager (AM)

Manages and monitors sales performance of the FSE team in terms of meeting production targets. Manages relationships with branch managers and staff to ensure bank branch support.

Qualifications

- Graduate of any College Course with at least 5 years successful sales experience in the financial services industry
- Must possess strong sense of integrity and entrepreneurial spirit
- Confident and results-oriented
- Preferably familiar with consumer banking operations and/or a licensed life insurance agent

Be a Part of the PHILAM Family!

Submit your resumé, transcript of records and photo now!

Corporate HR, 23rd Floor, Philamlife Tower, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City

Email address: Philam.jobs@AIG.com ; Fax #: 885-87-06
Please indicate your desired position in the Subject Title

Honda Cars Makati, Inc.

MAKATI • PASIG • ALABANG • SHAW

Honda Cars Makati, Inc., the first Honda Cars dealership in the Philippines and the benchmark of excellent customer service in the automotive industry, invites you to join its prestigious team as:

Sales Executive
Code: SE • A, B, C, D

- Male or female, 21 – 30 years old
- College graduate of any business course
- Previous sales experience an advantage
- Must be computer literate
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Hardworking, aggressive and resourceful
- Pleasant personality
- Knows how to drive and with valid driver's license

Marketing Services Officer
Code: MSO • A

- Male or female, 24 – 35 years old
- Graduate of Marketing Management, Mass Communications or Business Management
- With at least 2 years supervisory experience in the same capacity and with 3 – 5 years experience in coordinating, organizing and implementing events marketing
- Must have very good press/media relations; preferably with exposure to market research and media practitioners in print, radio and television
- Highly computer literate
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Excellent customer handling and interpersonal relations skills
- Service-, customer-, results-oriented, pleasant and with positive attitude

Human Resources Manager
Code: HRM • C

- Male or Female, 35 – 40 years old
- Graduate of Behavioral Science; Masteral degree an advantage
- With at least 3 – 5 years managerial experience in the same capacity
- Extensive knowledge in HR program/systems design and implementation
- Familiar with labor laws and formulation of company policies
- Effective planning and organizational skills
- Highly computer-literate
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- With people-development skills, analytical, flexible, ability to work under pressure and demonstrates discretion, integrity and fair-mindedness

Sales & Marketing Training Specialist
Code: SMTS • C

- Male or Female, 24 – 35 years old
- College graduate of any business course
- With at least 2 years experience in Sales, Marketing and Customer Service Training
- With background in Training Needs Analysis, Program Design and Evaluation
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Effective interpersonal and presentation skills
- Service-, customer-, results-oriented, pleasant and with positive attitude

Collector
Code: C • C

- Male, 23-30 years old
- Graduate of any business course
- With at least 1 year experience in related field
- Service and customer-oriented, hardworking, responsible, and with good interpersonal skills
- Knows how to drive a motorcycle and with license to handle 2-wheel vehicle

Service Advisor
Code: SA • A, B, C, D

- Male or female, 22 – 30 years old
- Graduate of BS Mechanical Engineering or Automotive Technology
- Knowledgeable in diagnosis of mechanical and body repairs
- Must be computer literate
- Pleasant personality
- Service-oriented, with initiative, responsible, resourceful and honest
- Knows how to drive and with valid professional driver's license

Technician
Code: Tech • A, B, C, D

- Male, 18 – 30 years old
- Graduate of Engineering or Automotive Technology
- At least 1-2 years experience in mechanical, electrical and air con works
- Knowledgeable in troubleshooting and diagnosis of vehicle
- Service-oriented, with initiative, responsible, resourceful and honest
- Knows how to drive and with valid professional driver's license

Body Repair Technician
Code: BRT • A, B, C, D

- Male, 22 – 30 years old
- Graduate of BS Mechanical Engineering or Automotive Technology
- With at least 1-2 years experience in related field
- Knowledgeable in body repair and painting operations specially vehicle restoration
- Service-oriented, resourceful, hardworking and details-oriented
- With valid professional driver's license

Parts Assistant
Code: SPR • A, D

- Male, 21 – 30 years old
- Graduate of Engineering or Automotive Course
- With at least 1-2 years experience in related field
- Knowledgeable in spare parts and accessories
- Must be computer literate
- Service-oriented, with initiative, responsible, resourceful and honest
- Knows how to drive and with valid professional driver's license

Production Control Assistant
Code: PCA • B, C, D

- Male, not more than 30 years old
- Graduate of BS Mechanical Engineering or Automotive Technology
- At least 1-2 years experience in Production or Job Control
- Must be computer literate
- With planning and organizing skills
- Service-oriented, with initiative, responsible, resourceful and honest

Interested applicants may send their application letter and résumé with 2x2-colored picture to the Human Resources Department. Please indicate the position code on the envelope

A. HONDA CARS MAKATI
Magallanes Commercial Center
Makati City 1232
852-6754 852-4181 to 82
loc. 107, 137, 154

B. HONDA CARS PASIG
E. Rodriguez Jr. Avenue
cor. Calle Industria
Bagumbayan Quezon City 1100
631-7476, 634-2730 loc. 220-221

C. HONDA CARS ALABANG
Alabang Zapote Road
cor. Investment Drive
Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City 1770
809-0552, 807-7889
loc. 151-157

D. HONDA CARS SHAW
Shaw Blvd. cor. Pilar Street
Mandaluyong City 1552
718-2058, 717-1651 loc. 410

You may e-mail your text résumé (without attachments please) to training_dev@pacific.net.ph or you may also visit our website at www.hondamakati.com.ph

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ASIA CALL CENTER LINK

Division of ASIA Partnership Phils., Inc.
"Setting GLOBAL standards in RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING for customer service professionals."

RECRUITMENT
ASIA CALL CENTER LINK is the foremost recruitment, training and consultancy firm in the Philippines. We recruit call center professionals for **ALL LEVELS** for the biggest call center operators in the country.

GLOBAL CONTACT CENTER TRAINING
We partner with international consulting/training organizations to provide internationally accredited training programs.

START YOUR CAREER AS A CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE!

You can start a career in the call center industry if you possess the following qualifications:
> College Graduate and Undergraduate
> Fluent in written and spoken English
> Computer-literate
> Willing to do night shifts
> Can thrive in a fast-paced environment
> Service-oriented

We invite you to e-mail your resumés for immediate processing to:
asialink@asiapartners.net
www.asiapartners.net
848-6595

An expanding progressive company is urgently in need of the following:

ACCOUNTANTS/ACCOUNTING CLERKS/ BOOKKEEPERS/CHEMICAL/ MECHANICAL ENGINEERS/TECHNICIANS/ FEMALE MARKETING ASSISTANT/ SALESMAN/INVENTORY CLERK/ EXECUTIVE/COMPANY DRIVERS

(with more than 10 years driving experience)

Qualifications:

- Preferably with working experience
- Computer literate/familiar with windows and office
- Hardworking, reliable and responsible
- Good moral character, work ethics and pleasing personality
- Proficient in English/Tagalog
- Good oral & written communication skills

Qualified applicant kindly send in your detailed resumé and transcript together with an inexpensive photo to:

Personnel Manager
P.O. Box 380
1502 Greenhills, Metro Manila, Philippines

A transnational company engaged in marketing and distribution of branded household and personal care products urgently needs qualified

Accounting Assistant

We are looking for:

- Accounting graduate preferably has taken the Review and CPA Board Exam.
- A self-starter, thinker, doer rolled into one and worked with less supervision, at least not more than 30 years old.
- With experienced in bookkeeping and financial report preparation.
- Must be computer literate.

We offer competitive salary for successful applicant.

If you have what we're looking for, please submit comprehensive resume to: gentlesupremephil@yahoo.com, or fax at (02) 837-2539, not later than December 27, 2003. Only qualified applicants will be called for interview.

We're looking for people who are passionate about their work. Epixtar is an intense, fast-paced telesales company where we care about our customers, the quality of our work, and each other.

EPIXTAR

Earn More Learn More Be More

General Requirements

- Willing to work in Alabang/Quezon City
- Most positions require the ability to work night shift e.g. 9pm-5am
- Must possess at least a Bachelors/College Degree in any field
- Applicants should be Filipino citizens or hold relevant residence status
- Must possess strong verbal and written English skills
- Strong computer skills – Microsoft Office proficiency required
- Knowledge of US culture, business environment and geography preferred
- Call center experience preferred

Vice President, Human Resources – Philippines

A unique opportunity to participate in the creation of dynamic, sales-focused call centers in the Philippines, serving the U.S. market. This senior executive will support Epixtar's corporate strategy as it pertains to the human capital of a global enterprise.

Job Description/Responsibilities

Assume overall responsibility for all facets of Human Capital management for multiple locations in the Philippines.

Work closely with senior management to design and implement HR policies to attract, develop and retain high caliber talent in building a world-class organization.

Develop and maintain HR systems, HR databases, employee documentation, records and files on a daily basis, in line with corporate vision and directions.

May involve some international travel.

Education and experience:

Post Graduation in Human Resources and organizational development from a premier academic institution. Degree or certification in Employment Law is desirable.
Ideal candidate should have about 8+ years of broad-based work experience in all facets of HR, preferably 3+ years in a senior management capacity. Candidates should currently hold director level position or above.

Compensation:

Position carries market leading salary and benefits.

Reply to VPHRPhilippines@epixtar.com with resume, salary requirements and availability.

Previous applicants need not apply.
Only Qualified applicants will be entertained.
For Inquiries call 7711081. You may also apply online at www.epixtar.com or at www.recruitmentph@epixtar.com

Manager, Finance

An excellent opportunity for a financial manager ready to expand their professional role to encompass additional responsibility and challenges.

Responsibilities:

Responsible for establishing an internal control environment that safeguards the assets and financial resources of the corporation.

Review accounts to ensure compliance with corporate standards and accuracy in preparation for public audits.

Oversee preparation of monthly payroll, expenses statements, reimbursements etc., in line with company policies and government regulations.

Assist in the development of strategic plans, annual budgets, statutory record keeping and monitor necessary progress.

Analyze and interpret all financial and budget reports and recommend efficiency improvements to lower the costs of the organization.

Recommend to management improvements to the methods and procedures of the accounting process.

Education and experience:

CPA and/or Masters Degree in Finance & Accounting is required. Ideal candidate should have about 8+ years of work experience, preferably with 3+ years in a management capacity.

Compensation:

Position carries excellent salary and benefits.

Reply to FMPhilippines@epixtar.com with resume, salary requirements, and availability.

Training Manager

Responsible for the implementation of training policies, programs, procedures and schedules. The major focus will be on designing curriculum and coordinating Sales Trainers to deliver sales-focused training to Call Center Sales Executives & Team Leaders.

This is a leadership role in the organization's sales drive. The successful applicant will be both skilled & highly driven, comfortable with accountability for Sales Trainers and Sales Executives' performance, and dynamic enough to inspire the organizational learning experience.

Requirements
- 4+ years experience in sales training
- 2+ years experience in managing a training department
- Responsible for product, induction, accent training elements
- Strong people management skills
- Proven record in curriculum development and instructional design
- Outstanding presentation skills
- Ability to design, implement and manage sales training metrics
- Self-directed
- Results oriented

Senior Sales Trainer

Day-to-day responsibilities include: designing sales training curriculum in conjunction with the Training Manager, delivering sales skills training to Call Center Sales Executives and Team Leaders, tracking and communicating results of ongoing sales training activities.

This is a leadership role in the organization's sales drive — the position requires a consummate sales professional with an intimate understanding of the sales process. The successful candidate will be skilled and highly driven, comfortable with accountability for excellent sales technique throughout the call center.

Requirements

- 3+ years direct sales experience
- 3+ years experience in sales training in a highly competitive environment (e.g. insurance, real estate, telemarketing)
- Prior experience with training large groups in a business setting
- Outstanding sales and presentation skills
- Results oriented

Enrichment Manager

Responsible for designing and implementing short and long-term employee morale programs, contests and parties to foster a dynamic, hard-working, and rewarding environment.

Assess staff needs to champion personal and professional development programs to center management. Assist in establishing a presence for the organization in the community through ongoing outreach programs. Integral member of the core management team charged with maintaining esprit de corps.

Requirements

- Excellent interpersonal and presentation skills
- Highly creative and action oriented
- Understanding of what works motivationally in a call center environment
- Ideally in a similar role currently

Grants Manager/Office Manager – Philippines
An international marine conservation/ sustainable development NGO is seeking to fill the above position as it expands its Asia-Pacific operations. The post's main responsibilities are ensure the organization's compliance with rules and regulations governing grants and contracts; coordinate grants accounting, and, manage and coordinate general office activities and workflow The position is based in Makati, Metro Manila.

Candidates must be able to:

- Provide leadership and coordination in all areas of financial systems development and management, i.e. accounting, bookkeeping and banking.
- Manage both governmental and non-governmental grants from pre-proposal activity, through award administration, to closing, ensuring compliance with all applicable rules and regulations.
- Advise and support project managers and personnel on grant management and compliance issues.
- Assist in the annual budgeting and prepare all financial reports for grants.
- Build internal grant accounting capacity through training and process enhancement.
- Develop ways to improve efficiency and accountability of office workflow.
- Assist MAC staff with travel and communications

Qualifications:

- Bachelors in accounting, finance or other equivalent degree or at least five years related experience.
- 2-3 years experience in grant accounting, strong preference for experience with USAID grants.
- Experience in managing an office with field staff and activities
- Good communication skills, both written and spoken.
- Good problem solver, analytical and adaptable.
- Excellent computer (PC) skills and experience, including accounting software, spreadsheets and e-mail.

The organization is seeking a three-year commitment from candidates, based on an annually renewable contract with a salary commensurate with qualifications and experience

Interested applicants should send a covering letter, curriculum vitaé and the names and contact details of three references via email to: Branchmanager@mail2world.com

The closing date for applications is
January 5, 2004

A.V. Paule Const. Co., Inc.
is in need of
ELECTRICIANS, PLUMBERS & CARPENTERS
for possible assignment in MARILAO, BULACAN
Requirements:

- Not over 40 years old
- At least high school graduate
- With work experience
- Of good moral character

Pls. report to:
658 C Palanca Sr. St.,
Tel. 735-7173 / 734-95-20
or at SM Marilao,
look for Engr Ponce / Engr. Mueca

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PHILIPPINES

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Interpharma (Asia Pacific) Ltd. is a healthcare and information services company with operations in 12 countries in Asia Pacific that provide manufacturing, marketing and distribution services to pharmaceuticals companies:

Through its affiliate company. Zuellig Pharma Corporation, we are accepting applicants for the position of ..

Logistics Operations Analyst

Position Code: LOA.12.03

The successful candidate will be a highly motivated self starter with solid experience in warehousing operations and technologies at both operational and decision making levels. Sound project management skills and the ability to influence at all levels will be key to the job holders success.

The role includes the Development and Administration of a Long Term Logistics Plan for Capacities and Asset Requirements, administration and interpretation of a current set of Key Performance Indicators and the development of Access Databases and PC based applications for operational monitoring.

The job holder will possess excellent communication skills that will ensure successful rollout of new working methods and technologies across a diverse set of operational environments.

Qualifications

- ⊙ University graduate in a business related discipline
- ⊙ Minimum of 5 years experience in a logistics related role
- ⊙ Experience of key performance indicator administration, introduction &/or development
- ⊙ Experience of activity based costing/management
- ⊙ Experience in distribution centre design, layout or major change projects
- ⊙ Previous experience working with colleagues in other Asian countries
- ⊙ Willing and able to travel in the Asia Pacific region

Competencies

- ▣ Demonstrable analytical skills
- ▣ Project management skills
- ▣ Excellent English written and verbal skills
- ▣ Has thorough knowledge of MS Office applications particularly Access, Excel, Vision and Project
- ▣ Demonstrable knowledge of warehousing operations

Interested jobseekers may send their resumés to...

HR RECRUITMENT MANAGER
2F Zuellig Pharma Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City
Tel. No. (6 32) 819 1561/Fax No. (6 32) 867 3194
Or
send your resumé via e-mail to:
loa@interpharma-lsg.com

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Great news!! The Canadian government lowered its pass mark to **67 POINTS** for SKILLED WORKER / INDEPENDENT CLASS applicants. APPLY NOW!! For as low as US$1,000.00 for single applicants.

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E-mail: standardphilippines@yahoo.com

We are looking for
ARCHITECTS
to design the Structure for the PCCI show ground and contractors.

Please submit you company profile to:

PHILIPPINE CANINE CLUB, INC.
Rm. 206 Hillcrest Condominium
1616 E. Rodriguez Sr. cor. Hillcrest St.
Cubao, Quezon City
Look for: Bernie or Jojo
Tel. No. 721-8345 / Fax: 721-7152
E-mail: pcci@I-manila.com.ph

Managing Director and Finance Officer needed

We are a non-stock microfinance organization called "Sustainable Economic Activity Development Inc." (SEAD) and we provide technical assistance, training and wholesale loan financing to local cooperatives and NGOs to support their microfinance activities. Details about our organization are found in our website -- www.sead.org.ph Currently, we need a **Managing Director,** who shall serve as the chief executive officer of the organization. He/she will be responsible for all day-to-day activities of the organization; for implementing the business plan, guiding all planning and budgeting activities, supervising and directing all field staff and preparing financial / operational reports. The Managing Director directly reports to the Board of Trustees. The qualifications of the Managing Director that we need include the following:

- Proven management and leadership skills; with at least 7 years of actual work experience;
- Participatory management style and committed to good governance practices;
- Strong microfinance or banking experience; with good financial management and analytical skills;
- With proven integrity; free from any vice;
- Social-development oriented; Filipino citizen;
- Age is 35 years old or older;
- Job is based in Metro Manila but requires extensive local / provincial travel;

Compensation for the **Managing Director** will range from P40.000 to P70.000 depending on qualifications.

We also need a **Finance Officer**, who should have the following basic qualifications:

- Major in accounting or financial management; preferably a CPA;
- With at least 3 years experience in general accounting, record keeping, and in keeping track of loans;
- Preference will be given to those with some experience in banking or microfinance
- Job is based in Metro Manila.

Applicants may send in, by postal mail, their applications and biodata to SEAD Inc. c/o CARE, PO Box 2052 Manila Central Post Office, Manila, Philippines, or by LBC to SEAD c/o CARE, #55 Don Benito Hernandez St., Jalandoni Compound, Pasay City, 1300 Metro Manila. Deadline for applications is January 5, 2004. Indicate what position you are applying for. All applications will be treated confidentially; only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

RNC TECHNOLOGY PHILS., INC.
IS IN NEED OF THE FF.
1 CIVIL ENGINEER (MALE)
30-40 yrs. old
Board Passer
1-3 yrs. site experience
With Driver's License
1 SALES ENGINEER (FEMALE)
21-23 yrs. old
Civil Design Engineer
With pleasing personality
With Driver's License
Send your resumé thru fax
861-5950 / 852-0268

We need
3D/CAD Modellers/Renderers
with experience in architectural visualizations.
Part time and full time positions available.

send your resumé with photo to:
jobs@dna.com.ph
or call 7220692 for details.

Shakey's

...WE'RE HEATING UP!!!

Shakey's is set to expand aggressively and is now looking for winners who can deliver!

STORE MANAGERS / ASST. MANAGERS

- Male or Female, 22-35 years old with at least 3 years experience as store manager in any of the major food chains.
- College Graduate, preferably with a degree in. either Hotel & Restaurant Management, BS Marketing, BS Food Nutrition or any other management courses.
- He/ She must be results-oriented with a strong desire to excel and possess very high personal standards.
- Must have a pleasing personality, good inter-personal and communication skills. He / She should have proven leadership and management skills.
- He/She must be very knowledgeable in Restaurant Operation, Financial planning and management (store P&L and budget preparation). Adept in LSM and "must" be very "Guest-Service" oriented.
- He/ She must be flexible, analytical and can deal with people from different levels of the organization. Computer Literacy a must.

MANAGEMENT TRAINEES

- Male / Female, 20 30 years old preferably with food service experience in any of the major foodchains. Management or supervisory experience a plus.
- College Graduate, preferably with a degree in either Hotel & Restaurant Management, BS Marketing, BS Food Nutrition or any other management courses.
- Must have a pleasing personality, good inter-personal and communication skills. Possess good leadership and management skills and has a strong desire to learn and grow
- Flexible, analytical and can deal with people from different levels of the organization. Computer literacy a definite advantage.

STORE MARKETING OFFICERS

- Male / Female, 20 30 years old preferably with experience in any of the major foodchains. Management or supervisory experience a plus.
- College Graduate, preferably with a degree in BS Marketing.
- Must have a pleasing personality, very good inter-personal skills and can communicate very well.
- Energetic, hardworking, creative and dynamic.
- Must be computer literate and can work flexible hours.

WAREHOUSE & LOGISTICS MANAGER

- Male, 30-38 years old. Degree holder, preferably a graduate BS Industrial Engineering & Management.
- With extensive experience in warehousing and distribution management ideally from any of the major retail foodchains or from a multinational food manufacturing companies.
- Must have excellent communication & inter-personal skills, very good quantitative analysis skills & highly computer literate.
- Hard -working, self-driven, proven leadership skills, and possess high personal integrity.

MATERIAL ENCODERS

- Female, 20 30 years old. Graduate of BS Accounting.
- Experience in logistics and warehousing encoding functions a plus.
- Computer literate, good quantitative and analytical skills.
- Flexible, hard-working and must have high personal integrity.

TECHNICAL SERVICES MANAGER

- Male, at least 30- 40 years old. Engineering Graduate preferably a Licensed Civil, Mechanical, Industrial or Electrical Engineer.
- Extensive experience (at least 2 years) in managing and leading construction and maintenance teams of multi-unit companies preferably with any of the leading foodchains.
- Must have very good working knowledge in the areas of store design & construction, preventive maintenance programs, equipment training and evaluation.
- Self-driven, analytical, hardworking, results-oriented, very detailed and organized, and with proven leadership and management skills.
- Must be computer literate with very good communication skills and have unquestionable integrity.

QA/R&D ASSISTANT

- Male / Female, 21- 28 years old. Graduate of BS Food Technology, BS Nutrition or HRM.
- Must have relevant experience in product & raw material quality monitoring preferably from a major foodchain.
- Flexible, hardworking and computer literate.

TRAINING MANAGER

- Male or Female. With at least five (5) years of hands-on experience in the organizational development and training in corporate setting.
- Adept in the formulation, designing, and implementation of training program and other related activities.
- Must possess a good command of English language, both oral & written skills.
- Young, personable, energetic and can deal with different types of people in the organization.
- Proficient in PC hardware and Microsoft Office Application is necessary

*Applicants may send their resume at **AFP-RSBS Industrial Park C5 Km. 12 East Service Rd. Taguig.***
or E-mail applications at "cpvillanueva@shakeyspizza.ph"

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGER

A multinational electronics company with several subsidiaries all over the world and whose Philippine subsidiary belongs to the Top 20 Corporations in the Philippines is in need of a topnotch HR Manager for its plant operations in Canlubang, Laguna.

Reporting directly to the HR Department Director, the candidate will be mainly responsible for employee relations, payroll, documentation, statutory benefits functions, among others. She will closely supervise a group of Employee Relations personnel who are tasked to assist line Managers and Supervisors in handling day-to-day employee and disciplinary issues and concerns, as well as attend to the counseling needs of rank and file employees. She will sit in the Employee Relations Committee composed of employee representatives from different sections which tackles vital issues affecting labor on a regular basis. She will be on top of a group of payroll staff who prepares the payroll of all monthly-paid and daily-paid employees, except confidential employees, of this labor-intensive organization, coordinating closely with the payroll software provider for system problems and other concerns that may be encountered.

The preferred candidate is one who has at least 5 years similar experience preferably acquired from a medium to large-sized multinational labor-intensive corporation. Familiarity with labor laws and regulations is a must. Candidates should be female, college degree holder and between the ages of 28 and 35.

The values of fairness, honesty, integrity, creativity and resourcefulness are essential to the job. The successful candidate can look forward to opportunities for both professional and financial growth.

Mail resumés to P.O. Box 4037 MCPO, Makati City marked HRM-03-0001. All applications will be treated in strict confidence.

WANTED: 1st. Class Diesel Mechanics (Overseas)

Bisnes Mami, Phils., Inc., an Automotive and Truck Parts Dealer with offices in California, Guam, Saipan, Rota, and The Republic of Palau, has openings for two (2) 1st class Diesel Technicians for its Heavy Equipment Division in Saipan - Mid Pac Far East Micronesia.

The successful applicant must have the working knowledge and certificates in one or more of the following areas:

Cummins engines, Detriot Diesel engines, MBE, Allison transmission, power generation, marine engine repair, truck repair, and forklifts repair. He must also be knowledgeable in electronic engine and transmission control systems.

Applicant must be of good moral character, a team player, company-oriented, honest, hardworking, and capable of finishing a job efficiently without supervision. Familiarity with the PERT-CPM is a plus but not required. An excellent compensation package and opportunity to migrate and work in the United States await the successful applicants.

If you believe that you have the qualifications required fo the position, please send your resumé to:

Bob Robbins
P.O.Box 2602, MCPO Makati City, 1266
Tel: 843-1984 / 812-1101

or fax Resumé to : 1-671-632-5167
Attention: Larry Brazil

Police and Court Clearances, and Health Certificate are required during the interview and these documents should not be more than six (6) months old.

NOW HIRING!!!

Gaming Assistants for Casino

- ✓ Female w/ pleasing personality
- ✓ At least 5'3" in height.
- ✓ Business degree holder w/ computer knowledge
- ✓ 3 years experience in marketing or customer service oriented companies.
- ✓ Excellent in oral & written English

If you are qualified w/ these requirements, you may apply at **RUNNING MATE INC.** Casino Department at # 816 Edsa Near Co. Kamias Road, Quezon City
(Tel. Nos. 426-1358 / 426-74-45
and look for Pem)

FOCUS CARE CORPORATION

NOW HIRING

OUTBOUND TELEMARKETERS/ CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

- ➢ College level or grduate from a reputable school
- ➢ Able to express self with ease in English
- ➢ With excellent oral and listening skills
- ➢ With impressive voice quality, can project effectively and ethusiastically over the phone
- ➢ Confident and can readily influence clients given limited/short conversation time
- ➢ Successful sales experience is a plus
- ➢ Hardworking and determined to excel under minimum supervision
- ➢ Willing to work on rotating shifts (6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; 10 p.m. to 6:30 a.m.)

A lucrative compensation scheme, incentives and bonuses commensurate to performance await qualified applicants.

Apply personally with resumé at:
11th Floor Unit A/B, Strata 2000, Emerald Avenue,
Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1600

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A NEW YORK CALL CENTER

ACCOUNT MANAGER

- With salary of P190,000 – P250,000 per annum
- Preferably a graduate of UP, Ateneo or La Salle
- Must have at least one year experience in the field of sales and marketing
- Basic computer knowledge
- Good oral and written communication skills
- Willing to go on field and have flexible working hours

ACCOUNTING CLERK

- With salary of P120,000 – P200,000 per annum
- Must be an accounting graduate and must have at least one year experience in the same field
- 21 to 27 years old, must be a self-starter
- Basic computer knowledge
- Must have strong organizational skills with emphasis on accuracy

OUTBOUND SALES AGENTS

- With salary of P120,000 – P200,000 per annum
- Must have excellent command of the English language
- 18 to 27 years old, with outgoing personality
- Willing to work shifts (night/day or weekend)
- Basic computer knowledge
- Fresh graduates are welcome

TECHNICAL SUPPORT OFFICER

- With salary of P120,000 – P200,000 per annum
- Must be a college graduate of Computer Science, Computer Engineering or any related course
- Knowledgeable in hardware/software troubleshooting and networking
- Knowledgeable in scanning software and equipments
- Possesses a non-professional driver's license an advantage

PLS. SEND YOUR RESUMES WITH ID PICTURE TO:
marcia@nytelecon.com
or mail at P.O. Box 892 Dasmariñas Village, Makati City

PALMS
COUNTRY CLUB

The Palms Country Club, a first class private membership club in Alabang, Filinvest Corporate City, which opened in August 2002, is looking for:

SALES MANAGER for MEMBERSHIP SALES

Reporting directly to the Membership Head, the ideal candidate must have had at least two (2) years sales experience preferably in the fields of Hotel, Private Membership Clubs or any Real Estate Development industry. A mature self-driven, people person with exceptional communication and organizational skills.

Qualified candidates may send an application letter, resumé with passport size ID picture, transcript of records, certificate of employment and contact tel. no. to:

THE PALMS COUNTRY CLUB
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
1410 LAGUNA HEIGHTS,
FILINVEST CORPORATE CITY
ALABANG, MUNTINLUPA
e-mail address: hrd@the palmsclub.com

Rustan's

urgently needs...

BEAUTY CONSULTANTS

- Between 18 to 28 years old
- Has completed at least 2 years in college
- At least 5'2 in height with very clear complexion & pleasing personality
- Very good in oral English communication
- Must have at least 1 year work experience in beauty & skincare products

Attractive commission scheme awaits you!!!

BEAUTY THERAPIST

- Female, between 21 to 28 years old
- Graduate of Physical Therapy or Nursing
- 5'2 in height with clear complexion
- Must have actual work exposure in high-end Spa's and massage centers concentrating in facial & body massage
- Must possess a pleasing and dynamic personality
- Good in English communication

Interested applicants may apply personally to:

RUSTAN COMMERCIAL CORPORATION
Rustan Bldg.
EDSA, Mandaluyong City
(near Ortigas fly-over, beside Barrio Fiesta)
Applicants may be accommodated from Monday to Thursday between 8-11 am, in proper business attire.

URGENT NEED OF
EXPERIENCED
FEMALE
OCCUPATIONAL
SPEECH THERAPY
FOR IN-HOUSE DUTY
CONTACT:
0916-243-9433
EVELYN: 643-5122

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Our north-American Advertising and marketing Company is in need of 120 People to fill in various positions for 2004 nationwide expansion.

20 MANAGEMENT TRAINEES
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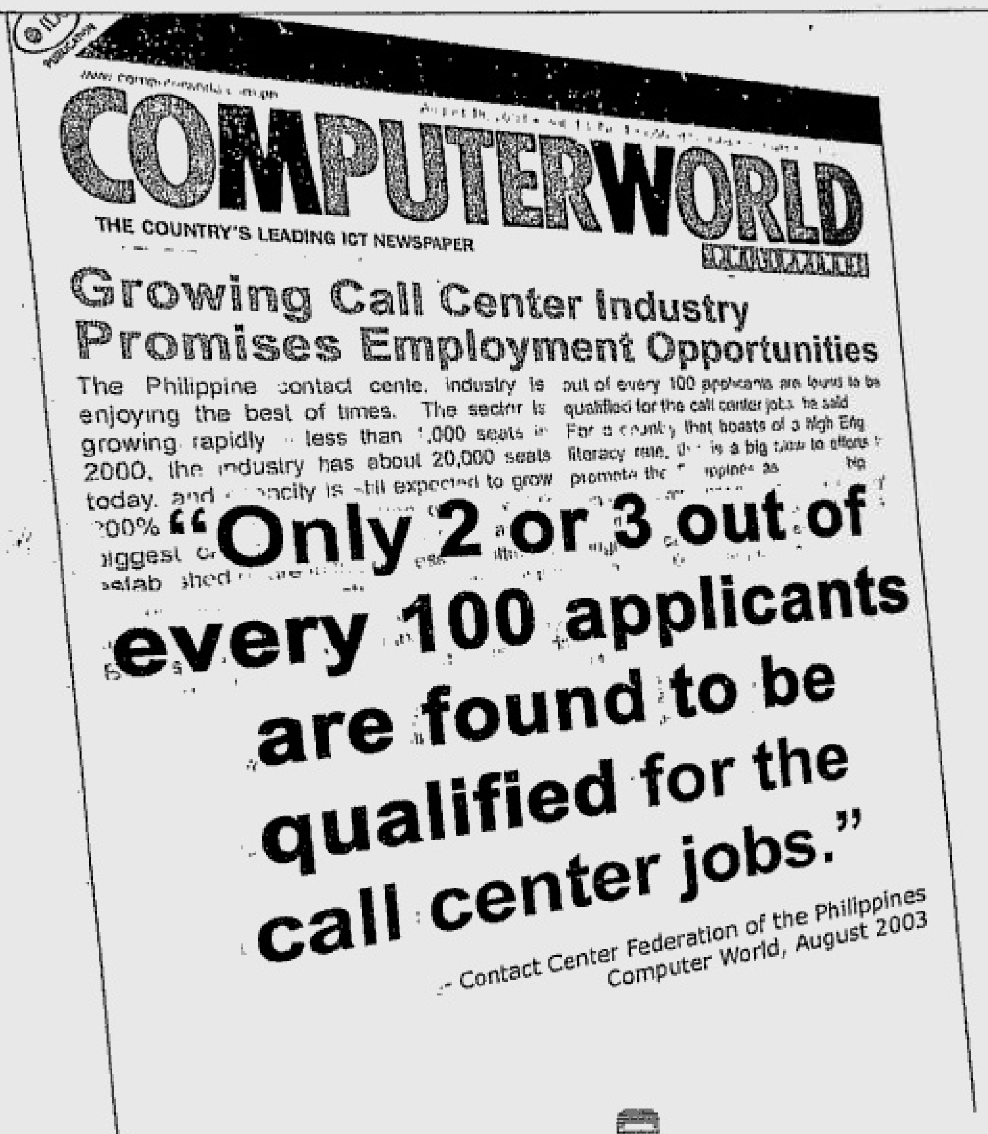

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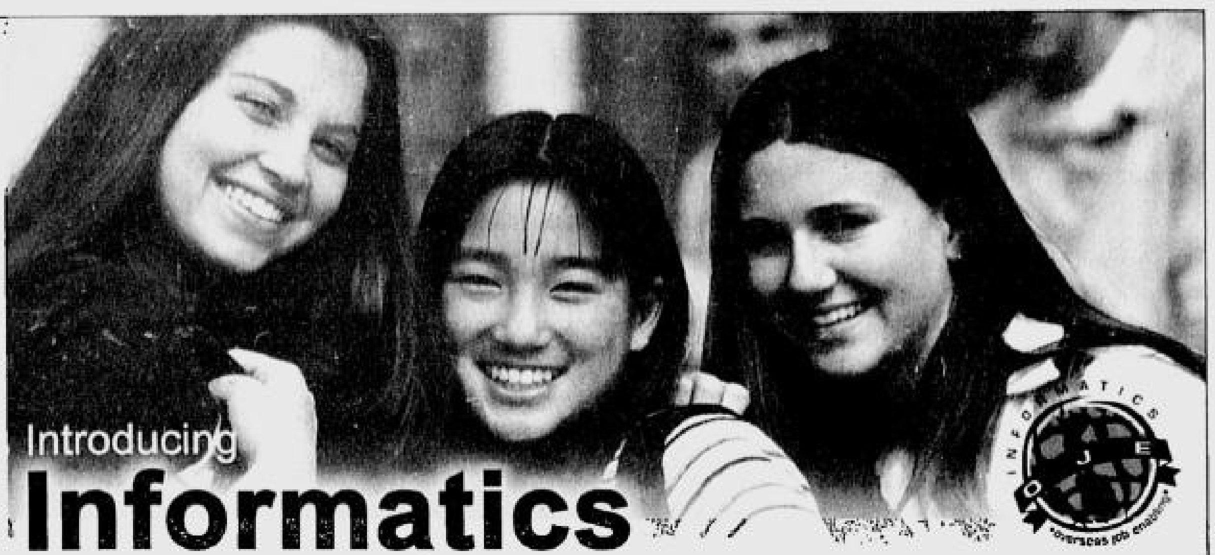
- Contact Center Federation of the Philippines
Computer World, August 2003



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Introvert learned to be open through HR work

By Candy G. Villanueva

HR Focus

MELISSA Flores was once an introvert. She was encased in her own shell of timidity until the art of human resources showed her the beauty of touching people. As soon as she stepped out of her shell, she realized the fulfillment of sharing herself with other people. As HR Manager of EO Executive Optical, it is Flores' job to make sure that EO Executive Optical is a hustling and bustling small community of hardwork-ing, happy workers.

EO Executive Optical has been providing quality eyewear since 1968. A visual care company, EO Executive Optical prides itself for excellent personal and excellent care for its patients with over 20 branches nationwide.

Discovering HR

Flores earned her degree in Bachelor of Arts in Sociology at the University of Santo Tomas in the early 80's. After graduation, she worked for the National Manpower and Youth Council (now known as TESDA) conducting research and developing brochures for out-of-school children.

After seven years of helping the underprivileged youth, Flores joined the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). It was at DTI where she was introduced to HR and slowly learned to crawl out of her comfort zone. "It was while I was at HRDS (Human Resource Development Service of DTI) that I felt I had to justify my position since I was not a rank and file employee." With the help of her boss, Director Baby Baua, whom she gratefully considers as her mentor and teacher, she was able to learn and understand the HR business.

"It is important that someone with more experience can guide you because they can give you feedback that will help you grow. At the same time, they can share their experiences so that you can avoid these pitfalls," Flores shares. "Learning becomes more meaningful if you have someone to share it with."

Her interest in the HR business further deepened when she was sent by DTI to Australia for a course in Special Program in Human Resource Management at the Australian National University. When she got back, she enrolled at the UP SOLAIR to broaden her knowledge. She earned her diploma in Industrial Relations from the University of the Philippines.

After DTI, she also worked for several private companies before she finally settled with EO Executive Optical where she found an opportunity for personal and career growth.

Professionalism

Joining the company at the start of the year 2003, Flores was impressed with EO's professionalism. "Our CEO and COO are able to share their excitement when they talk about the future of the company. You sense the urgency to make things happen. Employees are clear on the vision and mission. We do not pay lip service to our core values but instead live our values," Flores claims proudly.

Now more comfortable with people, Flores relishes her job as an HR Manager. "I get fulfilled if I am able to make a difference in the life of an employee. There are employees who come to me for counseling on either work or personal matters. It feels good when you know that somehow you are able to help them shift their paradigm."

Having worked for both private and government companies, Flores has learned a lot about the nature of people. "Employees' problems are basically the same. They want to be treated fairly by management and want to be appreciated for their good performance. It is not always the good pay that makes people want to stay," Flores asserts.

Far from the quiet person she once was, Flores now believes in being vocal. Communication for her is the key to dealing with people. "When employees have grievances, they need someone to listen to them and unload their concerns. This is one area which I believe an HR manager can be effective. By listening and being attuned to employees sentiments, labor-management conflicts can be averted."

FLORES (Seated) with her HR staff

PHOTO BY RANDY HORMILLOSA

As an HR Manager, Flores is the mediator between management and employees. "In cases where management's decisions is not that acceptable to employees, we have to ensure that employees will understand and respect management's decision. This is where strong interaction skills and compassion comes."

It is one of Flores's goals to look after the welfare of the employees but in return, she expects a lot from the employees as well. "It is important that personal values are aligned to the culture and values of the company." EO's HR Manager stresses this because she believes that most turnovers are caused by non-alignment of employee values. Flores encourages values like excellence, integrity, fairness, teamwork and creativity in the company.

Elementary teacher ...

From page L10

First of all, let me congratulate you for being in one of the noblest professions. Teachers at the primary level have the most impact on a person's development. In the course of a day, though you might not be aware of it, you are able to inspire future Filipino citizens to either live up to the challenge of our national situation or not to take part in it at all.

According to some recent studies made by developmental funding institutions like the World Bank, it is investment in the primary education of children that yields the biggest return for developing countries. The formation (for want of a better word) of children in values, attitudes, basic skills and habits that contribute to development will affect a country's economic, political and social state for years to come.

Your question makes me think of my parents who are both teachers. We were seven children and when I come to think about it now, though for sure our family ran on a tight budget, I never felt poor. The joys of the simple life with a big family is really what remains in my memory.

My mother was a public school teacher when I was growing up. She excelled in teaching and was committed to her professional development. She was able to teach at the collegiate and master's levels and become an administrator as well. I think she is proof positive that you can make that career shift if you want to.

In your case, you might want to take advantage of what you already have in terms of education. Your master's in Administration and Supervision is an asset. It qualifies you to take on administrative positions, including but not limited to being a school principal. Take a look at the different colleges and universities around to see if there are openings. In your resume, highlight administrative functions that you've taken on both in a professional and personal capacity.

This track might give you more options in the future. Should you decide after a few years in an administrative job that you still want to teach at the collegiate level, you could do so by pursuing a master's or doctorate degree in the field of your choice. Working in the institution where you might want to take further studies is also a plus. You might be able to get a scholarship or take advantage of opportunities that are offered to employees.

From your letter, I gathered that money is also a concern. Before making the change, you might want to compare the compensation schemes of different institutions in your area. Discretely ask around for information and short-list those institutions that seem to fit your career goals and financial needs. Since you are interested in further studies, you might want to see whether the school has grants for employee education and how soon you may be qualified to apply for them.

It is also important to live the present moment well. Be the best elementary school teacher you can be. This will not just give you a good track record. It will also help you discover, from moment to moment, the grace that comes from desiring to do His Will. May you find your way, Anxious Teacher, and be anxious no more. In this season of grace, all our prayers and best wishes go with you.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send Feedback through email to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to 892-2902)*

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Pioneer corner Madison Streets,
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✓ Qualified applicants will be scheduled and called in for a preliminary interview by phone.
✓ Provincial applicants are welcome to apply

God's voice in bad news

By Teresa R. Tunay, OCDS

WHAT does "trusting" or "believing" mean at the workplace? For many who may be so eager to have a job, it could be plunging right into work on the strength of the employer's promises. You are told that you would be given this much pay and this many benefits, doing this kind of work; you are made to believe that you can grow in this company and that you could hope for a promotion after a year, etc. So you buckle down to work even before the ink on your (unread) contract has dried up, and you give your all, generously sharing your ideas and your resources, believing in yourself and trusting your employer. Great if your employer delivers, but what if he turns out to be another sweet-talker who does not honor his word? What if you discover that you've invested your trust in the wrong boss, that he has actually hired you to save his neck? You may have been such an unflinching believer in divine providence but in the face of such disillusion, would you still be an angel?

It may be hard to believe that God would actually want you to suffer the injustice at the workplace but—cool it—think before quitting! I recall a text message I got some days back that goes "Life is at its weakest when there's more doubt than trust. But life is at its strongest when you learn to trust despite the doubts." When the boss's word can't be trusted anymore, there's still God's voice enveloped in the bad news. Unjust situations force us to discern, and discernment leads us to discover our inner strength that would have remained untried in fairer weather. *(E-mail the author at* avemaria@csi.com.ph*)*

REFLECTIONS FOR THE WORKING SOUL

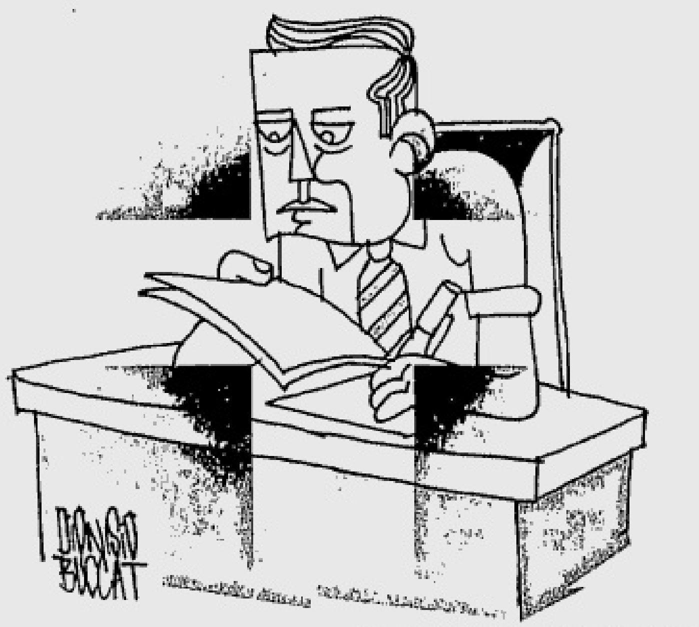

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

Gospel Lk. 1: 39-45

"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

Blessedness in work

By Bishop Precioso D. Cantillas, SDB,DD

MARY who just received and accepted the word of God proclaimed to her by an angel, readily and joyfully went to work and serve in the house of her cousin Elizabeth. She must have exuded a special aura as she approached her "workplace" and met the persons she was to serve, that Elizabeth noticed it and remarked, "Blessed are you ..." What could be the special reason for Mary's enthusiasm towards her work and the people she served?

It was Mary's encounter with the angel of the Lord who brought her God's word, which was to be her task and mission in life—to be the Mother of God's only begotten Son—that gave her enthusiasm. Mary believed in God's word and offered her total "yes" to it. After such humble faith and complete giving of herself to God, every single act of hers in her work and in her relationships with others acquired a "divine" color and made her and persons around her feel the "blessedness." The beautiful thing in this is that we, simple and ordinary believers, can also go through this same experience of Mary in our life and work!

Like Mary, we need to encounter God before, during and after our rounds of work. We should take time to stop and remind ourselves that it is God who gave us the job, and that the company or employer that hired us, is just the "angel" that the Lord used to give us the task He wants us to do. When we humbly believe that the Lord personally asked us to work and that our job is our response to His word, then we, too, will be "blessed," and like Mary, exude an enthusiasm that would be a blessing in the workplace as well. *(E-mail the author at* mfvg@skyinet.net*)*

What do you do if a coworker betrays you?

DEAR WW: I've worked closely with a guy for ten years. Recently, I discovered he screwed me by telling our boss about a confidential conversation we had. I really want to tell him off but I'm afraid that might be stupid.

Ticked

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

I'll never forget the first time I was in the newspaper. I'd pitched the paper on covering a project I was working on and they'd bit. There I was—two columns plus a photo above the fold on the front page. Was I proud . . . until two days later when I went to the market to buy some fish. I got home, opened the newspaper they'd wrapped the fish in, and guess who's picture was staring up at me? Yup. From celebrity to fish wrap overnight.

Hard as it was to stomach, I realized there's a point at which all news becomes old news. And the same is true for you. I'm not saying swallow your feelings and pretend nothing happened. But you probably should consider approaching him unemotionally and then, move on. See the questions below, then, check out Dennis & Michella Reina's book, "Trust and Betrayal in the Workplace" (Berrett Kohler, 1999).

Stifle revenge

Can you stifle that impulse toward revenge? Twice now I've had major blowups with people who later became good colleagues and friends. Did I want them to "sleep with the fishes" at the time? You bet. But I managed not to and gradually the rifts between us healed. You're not ready to offer an olive branch now, but if you can refrain from doing something harmful, there's a chance this fellow may eventually regain your trust.

Can you talk to him about what happened? The first step in repairing the relationship is talking. First, you need to tell him how you feel— calmly. Second, you need to hear his side of the story. Who knows? Maybe there were mitigating factors. Maybe he knows he goofed and can admit it.

Letting go

Can you let go of a grudge? Born and raised in Jersey, I can hold a grudge with the best of them. But an email I received recently pointed out how pathetic that can be. The emailer was complaining because she'd been passed over for a job seven years earlier. SEVEN YEARS! I thought, doesn't this woman have better things to worry about than this bit of ancient history? Her grudge was poisoning her entire relationship with her company, and in fact, her entire life. Even if you can't forgive, (I told her and myself), there's a point at which you should forget.

Can you still trust others? When you get crossed by someone you trust, it's easy to lose faith in humankind. Resist that temptation. Don't let your other friends and colleagues get tainted by one bad apple.

Face it. You're all wrapped up in your anger now, but you and your betrayer both need to air your feelings, because workplace conflicts are like fish. The longer they sit, the stinkier they get.

Poll results

Here are the results of our last workingwounded.com/ABCnews.com poll: How do you deal with a coworker who betrays you?

—Revenge is the best revenge, 15.1%

—Living well (and never mentioning it) is the best revenge, 37.9%

—Letting them know that you know is the best revenge. 46.8%

(Bob Rosner is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. Email him at bob@workingwounded.com.*)*

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(a) ASSISTANT MANAGER
(b) ACCOUNTANT

Position (a) is an important post for the holder is responsible for the overall running of the joint venture company, complying with all legal requirements, canvassing items for acquisition or investment, protecting and expanding the company's investment, supervising at least 5 staff, handling all human resources matter, sourcing further investment opportunities in the hotel sector for the company, and reporting to the expatriate VP. Candidates should have excellent academic and working record and several years of working experience in managing people in a professional setting. Possession of a vehicle is an advantage.

Position (b) is for a qualified accountant who shall handle bookkeeping, prepare financial statements and assist the Assistant Manager

Excellent remuneration will be provided to the right candidates. Please send detailed resumé, together with salary expected and a covering letter confirming your outstanding record to:

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1801 Robinsons Summit Center
#6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City

PROGRAMMER

Position Code: Cobol Prog

COBOL Legacy System with a VB front end

- ☐ Minimum 2 years programming experience in Micro Focus COBOL (or Net COBOL) and 2 years programming experience in VB6.
- ☐ At least 2 years experience in system analysis and design.
- ☐ Knowledge of ISAM file processing is required.
- ☐ Strong analytical skill and effective communication abilities.

Deltek System Philippines – a subsidiary of a 20 year old US based company and a Microsoft Partner – offers a competitive salary package (including Stock Appreciation Rights), a fast-paced working environment and a rewarding career path.

Please send your application to:
Deltek Systems Philippines, Ltd.
26th Floor, Tower 2
The Enterprise Center
Makati City
Phone: 632-886-5059
E-mail: APPLICANT@DELTEK.COM

Important: Please specify position code as subject in your e-mail.

MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES
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Médecins Sans Frontiéres, a non-profit, international non-governmental humanitarian organization is now in need of:

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To manage the mission pharmacy (capital, project pharmacy and emergency kits)

Qualifications:
- BS Degree in Pharmacy with valid license
- Minimum 1 year experience in managing drug inventories, including the proper maintenance of cold chain
- Good networking with drug suppliers
- Knowledgeable in handling the destruction procedure of expired drugs
- Very good communication skills and interpersonal relation skills
- Can work with minimal supervision, a team player and with initiative
- Exposure to non-governmental organization in a multi-cultural setting, preferable
- Computer literate
- Willing to work on a part time basis (once a week only)

All application letters, comprehensive résumés with a recent 2x2 picture are to be mailed and addressed to:

Ms. Ma. Carmela C. Mijares
Medical Doctor
Médecins Sans Frontiéres
#508 Camia St., Palm Village
Estrella, Makati City
Email: msfch-ph@compass.com.ph

Deadline for submission: January 5, 2004

Albergus

Albergus Management, Inc., a Foodservice Management Operator that specializes in Catering, Industrial/Institutional/Corporate Food Service Contracting and Manufacturing, needs highly qualified applicants for:

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

- Female, not more than 35 years old
- Graduate of HRM, FS Management, Marketing of any related course from a reputable school
- Highly personable and has above average oral and written communication skills;
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- Computer literate.

Interested applicants may mailor bring their resumé with 2x2 ID picture (recent), transcript of records, NBI and/of Police Clearance, Health Certificate, Letter of Recommendation, SSS, TIN & CTC on or before **December 27, 2003** at:

Albergus Management, Inc.
HR Office c/o Jenny Dakis
16-A Capitol Hills Road, Old Balara, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. 931-4852; 931-4854
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Compensation package commensurate to skills and performance (above industry monthly salary + commission + allowances + sales incentives)

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Selected candidate will be tasked to handle database maintenance and upgrades as well as developing new programs to enhance and improve overall operations for the company.

Male/Female, 24-35 years old. College graduate with a degree in computer science or related course. Must be proficient in Delphi 5 (or higher) programming language and has had at least 2 years working experience in programming and system analysis. Must be proficient in interbase and/or MSSQL database programming with at least 2 years relevant experience.

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Applicants to e-mail resumé to zgehrd@vasia.com or to apply personally starting January 6, 2004.

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Look for Mr. Angelo Villanueva / Ms. May Anne Gutierrez

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Sunday PEOPLE *at* WORK

Contributing Editor Regina Galang Reyes

The gift of hard work

BEST ★ Attitudes

By Teresa Reyes Tunay
Illustrations by Rolando Reyes

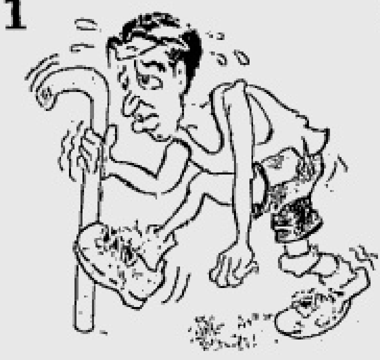
"HARD work" seems to be the most dreaded phrase of our age. Various media tell us life should be fun. Take things easy.

Go easy on yourself. Huge billboards along the road tell us "If you buy this product or use that, life will be easy for you..."

Just plug it in, switch it on... And on easy installments yet! See, it's all so easy! Thus, we avoid anything we have to work hard for.

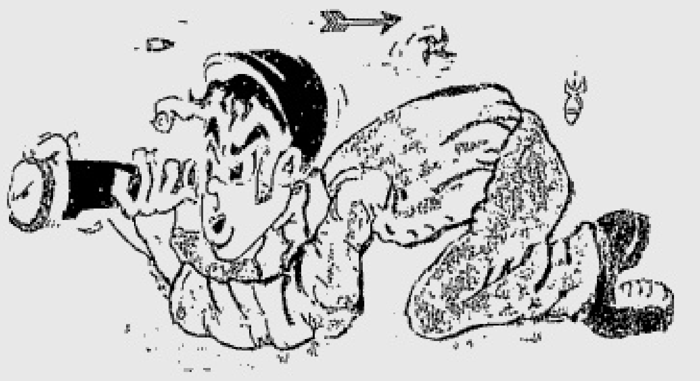
We're not championing masochism here but all that praise of ease could lead to an aversion for hard work when it may prove to be most beneficial. (You've heard of that teenager who held up jeepney passengers because "it's the fastest way to make money?" Clearly, a victim of all this campaign for easy living.) Here are tips to egg you on when you feel like giving up on your next "insurmountable" task:

1



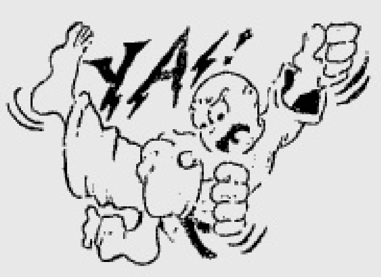
Psyche yourself. Tell yourself that though the road looks rough, you can make it. If at the start you are ready to give up, the whole journey will be a drag.

2



Stay focused. Set your sight on your goal. When you decide to do something, stick to it despite distractions, discouragement and temptations to "take it easy."

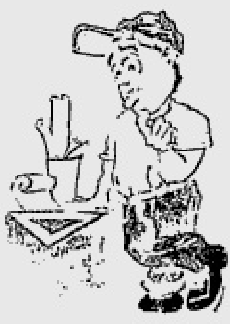
3



Be confident. If some people can split bricks with bare hand, so can you crush feelings of inadequacy with plain but well-directed self-confidence.

4

Be humble. If you're unfamiliar with the task at hand, ask for help. Nobody (not even Ernie Baron) can possibly know everything.



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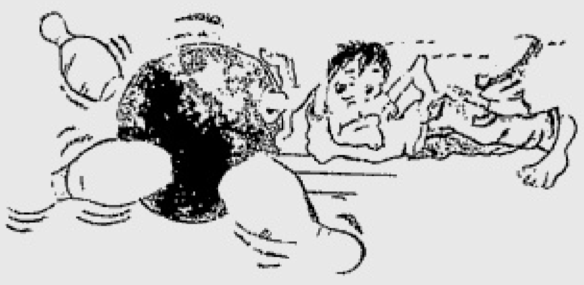
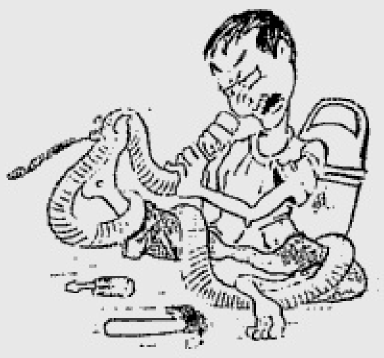


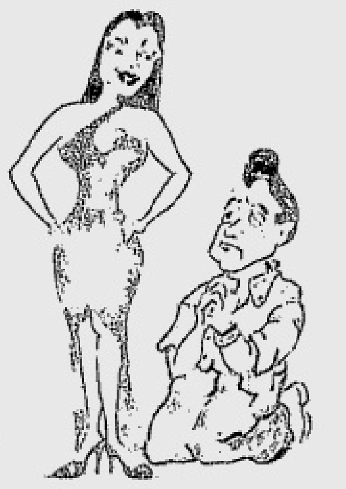
Be playful. Even if you know it's hard work, let the spirit of discovery and fun buoy you up—this keeps you from breaking up when you fumble along the way.

6



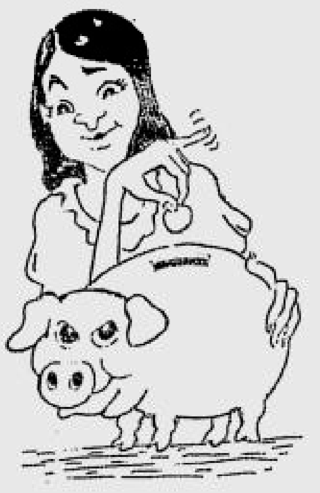
Be creative. There is more than one way to skin the proverbial cat—or to clean a pipe.

7



Be patient. Court success as a suitor would his ladylove. You wouldn't want to miss that feeling of fulfillment after accomplishing what looked like a formidable task.

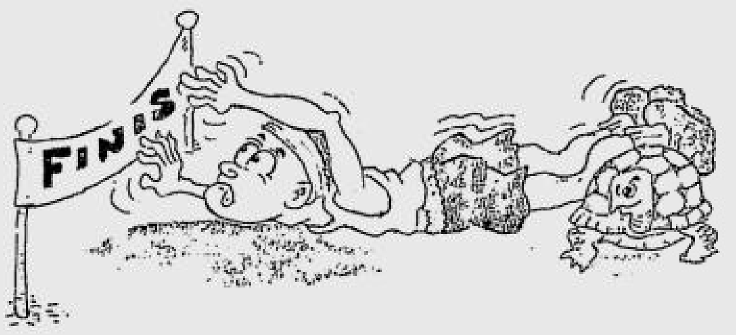
8



Conserve energy. As you would save spare coins, bank spare energy for unexpected loads. The after-6 "happy hour" mentality can do more harm than good to your energy reserves.

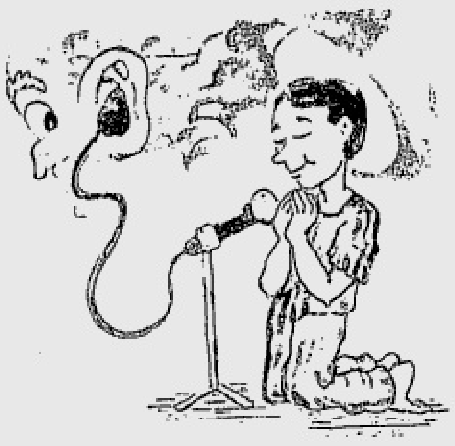
9

Run to the end. It's tempting to give up when you're weakening or tired. Find your own pace and spread your strength to see you through to finish line.



10

Don't do it alone. No matter how difficult the task at hand seems, there's always a worker-friendly Someone who's waiting to help you out. Use your direct line to the Source of power and ideas: prayer. Make it very simple. Ask fervently for what you want but be ready to wholeheartedly accept whatever He'll give.



Elementary teacher wants to teach in college

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

GOOD day! Praise God for your very inspiring and wisdom filled advice to all anxious people at work. I'm obviously one of them and I hope you can help me.

I've been teaching in the elementary grades for almost 19 years now. Presently, I'm a Grade 5 teacher teaching English and Science in a public school. I have finished my master's (major in Administration and Supervision) in a nearby college. It has been my ambition to teach in college but I'm not sure if I'll be accepted considering that my major is supervisory rather than teaching. Do you think I can still teach in college? I have been advised to apply for ranking in the administrative field (as a principal) but I am hesitant to take this path because I am a very sensitive and emotional person and I don't think I am worthy to be a leader. I am also thinking of maybe shifting to another career path. I hope you can enlighten me on this. You might advise me to pursue my doctorate but at present I have three kids all in school and one of them in college so they get a big share of our budget.

Thank you and I hope and pray God will continue to make you HIS channel of peace and blessings.

Anxious Teacher

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

Thank you very much for your kind words. Indeed, it is a blessing for us in Ancilla to have this column where we are able to 'build community' with other working people out there.

ELEMENTARY TEACHER/L8

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Reflections for the Working Soul
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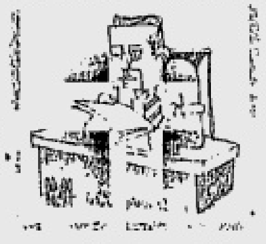

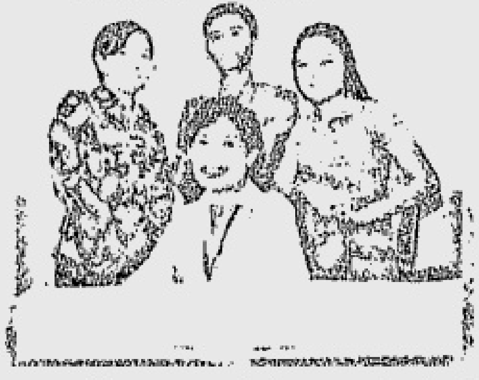

RAYUMA ALERT!

Q MACROXAM PATCH? Ano ang kaibahan nito sa iba't ibang gamot para sa Rayuma gaya ng mga chili plaster, cream o gel?

A Macroxam is the world's first transdermal Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug (NSAID) patch for arthritis. Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug o NSAID, is a class of treatment that provides an analgesic effect on pain. As a result, relief lasts longer than ordinary treatments. PIROXICAM, the NSAID formula in MACROXAM, is used to treat rheumatism, arthritis, osteoarthritis, tenosynovitis, myalgia, osteo-articular pain, and pain due to post trauma and post fracture healing. UNLIKE OTHER PATCHES, IT IS ODORLESS.

ARLO LUIS R. SALVADOR II, M.D.
General Medicine-Psychotherapy & Basic Sports Physician

Q Wala bang side effect ang MACROXAM?

A Because Macroxam is a drug in a patch that works through the skin, it has NO direct gastro-intestinal irritation. MACROXAM greatly minimizes the side effect of liver and kidney damage that usually accompanies orally taken NSAIDs. This treatment delivers the drug through the skin and directly to the inflammed joint, thus avoiding long-term adverse reactions and damage to the digestive system, liver and kidneys. This is because the plasma concentration of MACROXAM is 50 times less than the oral form of Piroxicam. Skin irritation is a possibility for those with hypersensitive skin.

Q Magkano ba ito? Baka naman hindi ko kayang bilhin ito?

A One MACROXAM patch is P75.00, but this is good for 3 days! Isipin mo na lang na kumpara sa ibang NSAIDs na may presyong P76.00 per day (price of 3 popular oral NSAIDs), di ba mas sulit ito dahil good for 2-3 days?

	Cost per day (Pesos)	Cost per 3 days	Length of pain relief per day	Savings
Brand X Oral NSAID	P 38.00 x 2*	P228.00	12 hours	—
MACROXAM PATCH	P 25.00	P 75.00	24 hours	P153.00

*assumes dose of two tablets per day

So in effect, the use of the MACROXAM patch is not only more effective but also more affordable in the long run because on a cost for 3-day treatment, use of Macroxam is 65% cheaper than the cost of other oral NSAIDs on a two-day treatment.

Sa MACROXAM, tanggal ang maga na sanhi ng kirot!

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- Walang aray, walang amoy!

For more information, call Macroxam hotline at Tel. 6329070 or text (0918)9015154, or (0916)2879882, (0916)6279060

If symptoms persist, consult your doctor.

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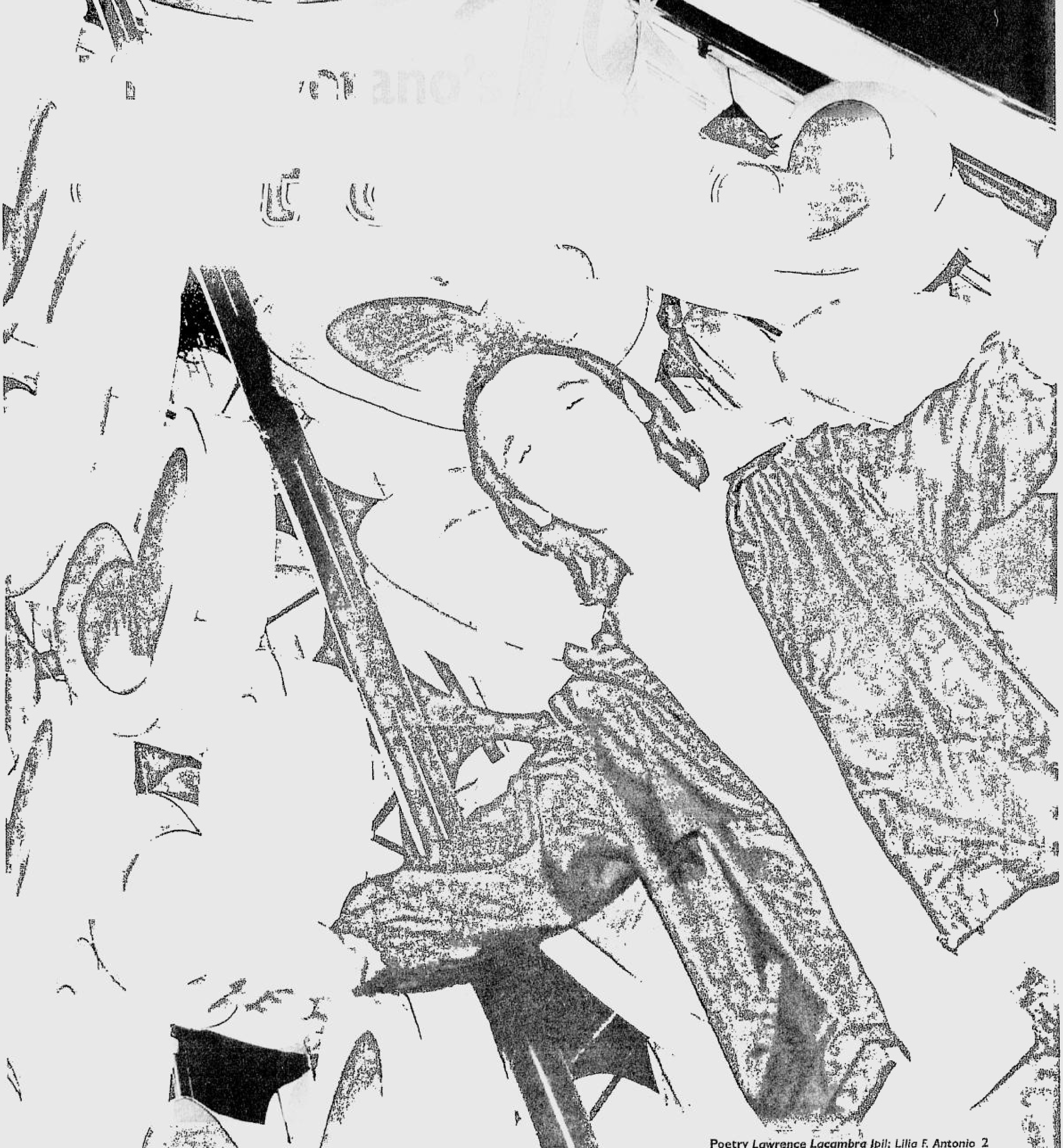
Sunday INQUIRER
GET TO KNOW SOME REAL PEOPLE
December 21, 2003



By Cora Llamas
Photographs by August dela Cruz

E HAS the soulful eyes of a poet, the chiseled *mestizo* features of a film star, and the fit body of a runner.

Although he is better known for risking his life as liver transplant donor to his father, the late Sen. Rene Cayetano, Lino Cayetano is fast making a name for himself as director of GMA-7's reality-based "Starstruck" star search show.

Born of a mother of German-American descent and in a relationship with a Dutch-Malaysian model, the youngest Cayetano son reveals what touches him most about these two women who are closest to him: "They're very Filipina."

The patriotism should come as no surprise. Under the loving if firm mentoring of their father, Lino and his three older siblings have discussed the nuances of politics and social responsibility at the breakfast table since childhood. Before going to bed, he'd listen to the senior Cayetano as that famous booming voice read the Bible aloud a room away. On other occasions, Lino would sit down and join his dad in reciting Biblical passages, though a bit more subdued. Well, Lino has always preferred the visual screen to the pulpit when delivering messages.

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Comedian Michael V may have mastered a multitude of roles, but he's best at playing Papa

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He may have died in a plane crash in 1998, but Boy Fernandez's birthday is still celebrated every December 22. Wife Olga Nery makes sure of that

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Renato Mercado has a new life, love and hope, seven years after getting a new kidney

Lino

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Lino's Filipino dream: "We're strong because of our sense of family"

While his other siblings have followed in their father's footsteps in law, Lino insists that all of them are "doing the same thing." They all went into law to share different ideas, he adds, except that he chose a different medium.

And how does a show that scours the country for starstruck kids who want to see their names in light fit into his vision? The young director has a ready answer: "I'm attracted to 'Star-struck' because of the concept of the Filipino *artista*. It's unlike anything in the world. They're expected to be singers, dancers, actors and entertainers. It's the Filipino dream."

Whereas the so-called American dream encourages every citizen or immigrant to achieve affluence and status through hard work and education, the Pinoy version uses a very different means to the same end. "The *masa* have too few role models. They open the TV and see *artistas* who came from nothing and became rich and powerful, leaders of our country even. `*Artista*' transcends all vocations and occupations. It HAS become the Filipino dream."

Lino's own dream is to be a filmmaker tackling Filipino ideas, concepts, and values. His resume is certainly helping him along: a bachelor of arts in Film and Audio-Visual Communications from the University of the Philippines (UP), a diploma in filmmaking from the New York Academy, and an ongoing graduate degree program in Philippine Studies also at the UP.

Given a chance, he would like to do films that "focus on families and what's unique about the Filipino family. We're strong because of it. Our goal is to modernize. We shift to fast forward and lose sight of what's important. In contrast, America is going back to the basics, to family values. We can take a lot of good things from the success of other countries, but should keep in mind that we have survived this long with nothing because of a strong family system."

The twentysomething director comes by those words honestly. The Cayetanos have always been one tight bunch, and the children learned their lessons on hard work, honesty, and moral values on their parents' knees and by example. Mom Sandra Schram-Cayetano's "*malambing*" nature was a counterpoint to Rene's disciplinary bent.

Though the family was comfortable, Lino never forgot his father's working-class origins, Cayetano *pere* being the son of a public school teacher and a mechanic. Lino's requests for extra spending money to treat out friends would be met with a devil's advocate of a question from his dad: *"May kaya ba tayong maglibre* (Can we afford that) ?" During the Cayetanos' annual trip to Hong Kong where they'd shop as a family, "Dad always said that we only need two shirts that we can wear alternately. This, coming from a guy who loves to dress up in suits!"

The discipline has definitely rubbed off on the son. While Rene was known as a gym buff and a workaholic who brought his work home, Lino does triathlons. "I have to be disciplined for it. I know that I have to keep healthy. I eat meat once a week; mostly it's just vegetables and seafood, no chicken, pork or beef."

Despite the Cayetano patriarch's super busy schedule, the family managed to spend time together. "Sunday night is family night. Saturday night is date night for mom and dad, but any of us kids could tag along if we wanted to."

Even as children, they could walk into his office any time. "He'd encourage us to ask him questions on anything because he loved talking and explaining things with a passion. After the 11 p.m. news, I'd choose videos that we could watch together. One of my joys was finding an old film that he hasn't watched yet and that reminded him of his youth, like 'Casablanca.'"

He would stand by his dad one final time as the old man fought a losing battle with cancer. The ordeal started with a diagnosis of hepatitis B in 1998. At the time, it gave them little cause for worry although from then on until 2002, Senator Cayetano started to weaken, his skin gradually turning yellow. Late last year, the entire family had to go to the US, where the senator was to undergo a liver transplant. Several tests for donor's compatibility left only his sons Renren and Lino as the possible donors. After further tests showed that Lino was the only compatible donor, he took a break from teaching film classes at the UP to prepare himself for surgery.

He recalls, "The transplant was a sensitive, low-risk operation. It took six months to a year for the wound to heal. Three months after the operation, I competed in a triathlon to show my dad that I was OK. He still felt bad that it had to be me to donate a liver. He didn't know about it until three days after the transplant. They wheeled him into the room for a transplant, and I stood up."

The initial good news would soon turn into shock when the senator was diagnosed with cancer of the liver. Hearing the news, the old man told his wife and youngest son: "You have done so much for me. Now you have to do one more thing. Take me home. We have to show the world that we Filipinos are a family. And that we cannot solve our problems as a nation if we do not go back to the Lord."

During the senator's darkest hours, Lino believed that he had seen a vision. "It was 3 a.m. in the US. My dad was in the bathroom when he saw a light. He ran to the bed crying, 'Why show Yourself, to me?' I've never seen my dad cry. He believed he had a mission. Our faith was renewed. He started talking about spending time with the Lord, going around the country, and spreading His word."

Given a choice, Lino's version of that message would come out on celluloid. He is also running in triathlons to encourage possible transplant donors and dispel myths that the operation could injure them. He and his siblings still keep in touch with each other and with their mom, get together on weekends and holiday gatherings, and consult each other on important decisions.

Also keeping him company is girlfriend Diana Van Walsun, a Dutch-Malaysian model he met in New York in 1999 while he was studying.

They share many things. Like Lino, her father is involved in affairs of the state—as the Dutch ambassador to the United Nations at one time.

"She's real smart," Lino gushes. "She finished film and literature and is taking her graduate studies in psychology at Oxford University. I was attracted to her the first time I saw her and immediately introduced myself." Not surprisingly, "she is very *malambing*. She's into values and is very family-oriented."

As the man once said, "She's very Filipina."

It's a term that Lino's in love with, just as he equally loves the country it represents. In the not too distant future, one might just see his interpretation of it on the silver screen.

PDI PHOTO

Home at last: The late Senator Cayetano with sons (from left) Rene Carl, Allan and Lino

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Managing Editor	**Pennie Azarcon-dela Cruz**
Associate Editor	**Ruel S. De Vera**
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Advertising & Sales Manager	**Kenny Nuyda**

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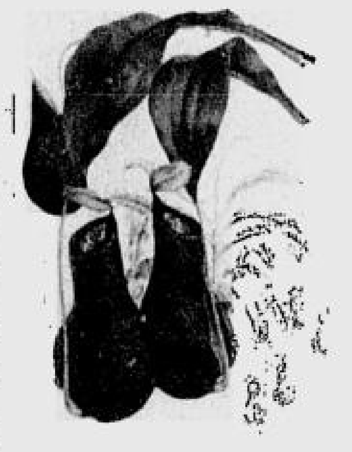


ANTIQUE PRINTS Decorative copper engravings and stunning lithographs from three centuries are featured in the exhibit Philippine and Asia-Pacific Viewscapes at the Gallery of Prints, 3/F Artspace, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati City until Jan. 7. Shown is "Nepenthes Henryana Will," chromolithograph by P. de Pannemaeker, c. 1884. *For more of This Week, see page 7*

Riddle of the Vase

I am what holds furtively
through days what is uselessly
beautiful, precious,

easily dustable,
staying in corners
where nobody looks,

gripping a fistful of yellow rings,
while my own face pales in the dark.

What do you think of when you hold
that dustcloth over my lip?
Where do you go when you step
out of those doors?

You who hold me only when you wish
to change what I keep,

who do not know that in my heart
I hold your stagnant water,

your tepid wish,
what stays when you pass-

your desire to keep breathing
what should be dead.
Bring me gifts from the fields.

I am your fervent dream of stillness.
Your future. I am what does not move
when you move.

Lawrence Lacambra Ypil

Una ang Buwan

tuwing madaling-araw
nagtatagpo ang araw at buwan
at naghihilahan
dahil muling inaangkin ng araw
ang ipinahiram niyang kaningningan.

kung minsa'y kaybilis gaya ng bulalakaw
kung minsa'y matagal gaya ng balangaw,
at laging nadadaig ang buwan
na sa mga tala'y nakahalayhay.

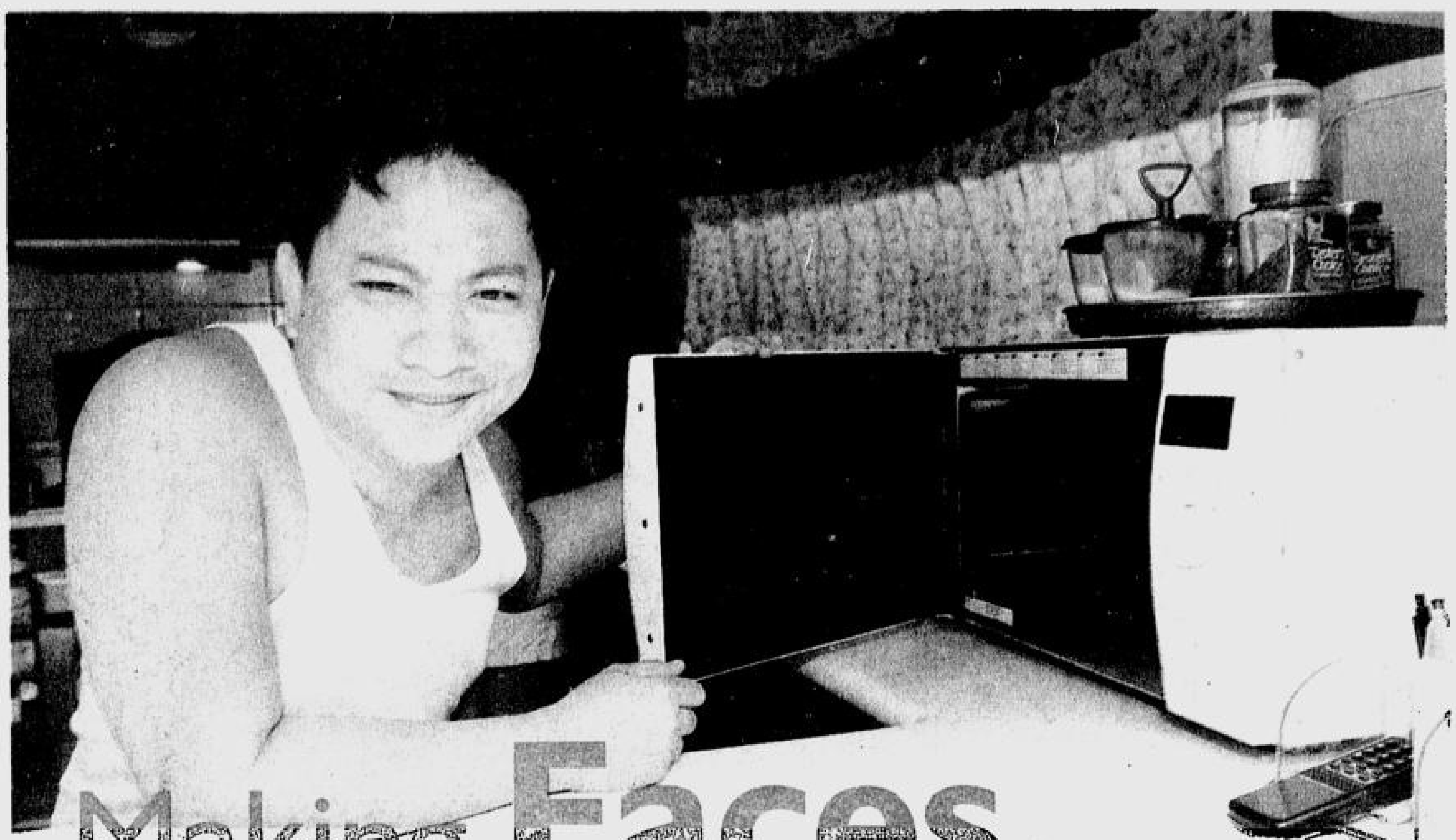
subalit tuwina
ang buwan ay patuloy
sa kanyang pag-iral.
bakit?
dahil bago pa man makasilay ang araw
nauna na siya
sa magdamag na pagtanglaw
sa madilim na sanlibutan.

Lilia F. Antonio

The **Sunday Inquirer Magazine** accepts contributions for our regular poetry section. Interested contributors should send a printed copy of the poem (which may be in English or Filipino) together with a self-addressed stamped envelope to Ruel S. De Vera, poetry editor, Sunday Inquirer Magazine, Chino Roces (formerly Pasong Tamo) corner Mascardo and Yague Streets, Makati City 1263, or e-mail to <poetry_sim@inquirer.com.ph>

All Access

Text and photographs by Erik Arazas



6:25 a.m.: Good morning, Bitoy! Searching for food in the kitchen

Making Faces

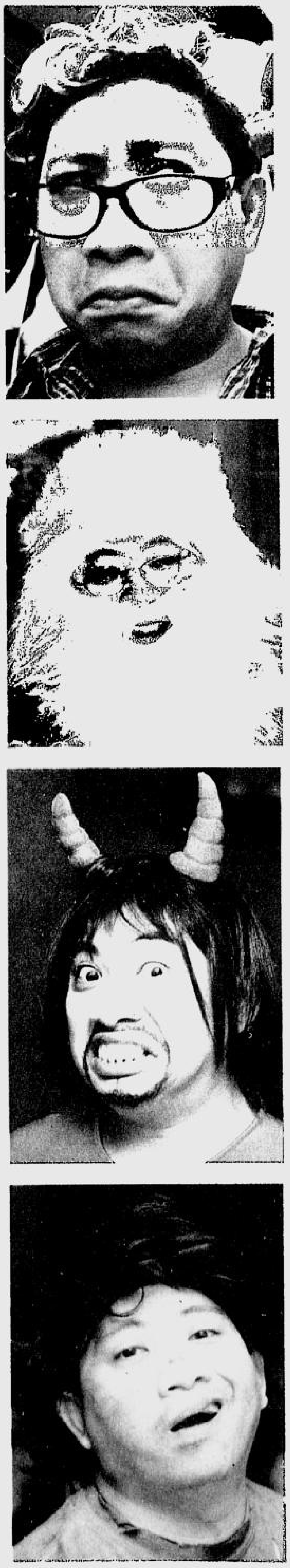
Comedian Michael V may have mastered a multitude of roles, but he's best at playing Papa

MICHAEL V starts his day by attending to his family. Also known as "Bitoy" among his closest friends and relatives, he personally accompanies his eldest son Milo and his daughter Yanni to school, kissing them goodbye before going to work. He munches on a ham sandwich and coffee while driving to Makati. "I don't mind the traffic, because sometimes I can compose a whole song before reaching my destination," he says.

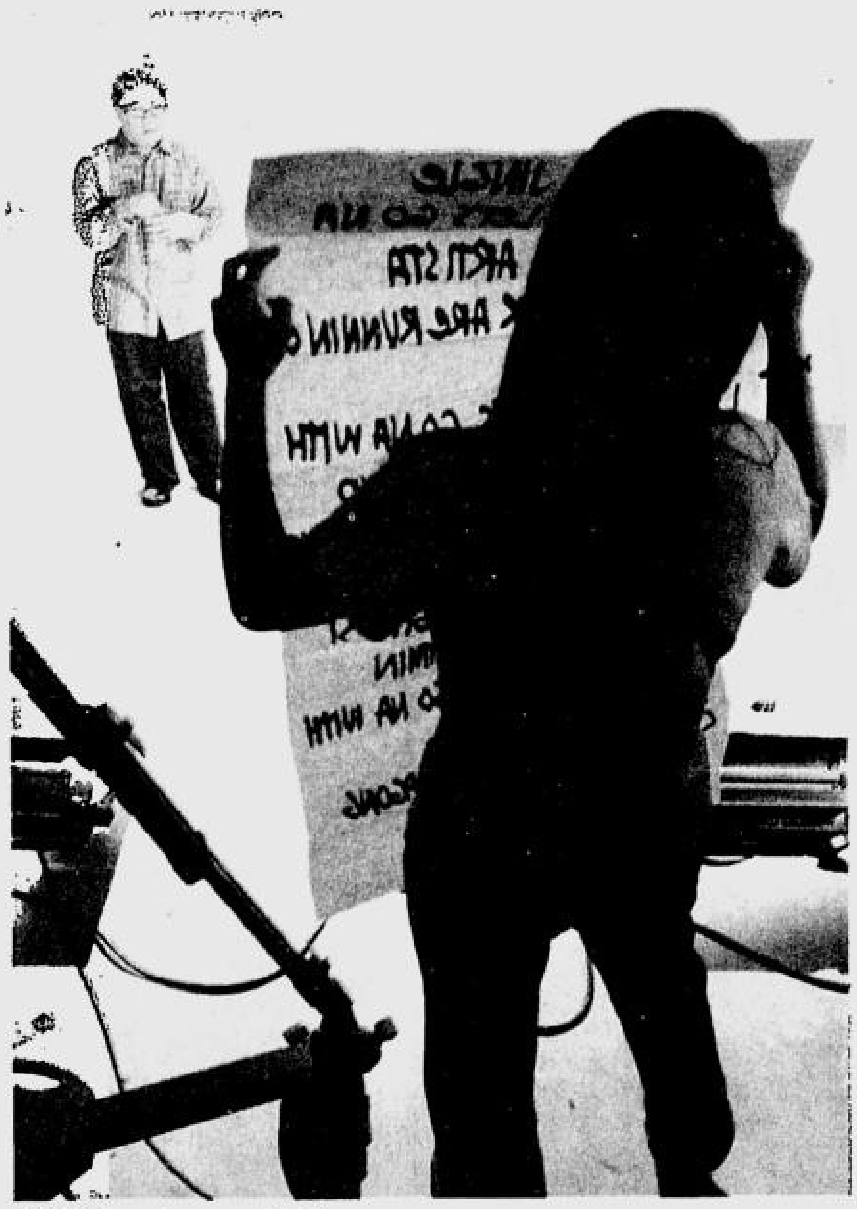
Arriving first on the "Bubble Gang" set, Michael reviews scripts. "It's the chemistry among actors and staff," he explains the success of the show. Indeed, they appear pretty close, as they crack jokes all the time, play computer games and basically fool around every break.

On the set, the work is quite exhausting, as Michael has to change costume over and over again. He helps the other actors and assists the directors—becoming the undeclared leader among them because of his kindness and intelligence. Late in the evening, he is tireless as ever. After the last take, though, it seems he can't wait to get home to his family. He offers me a ride to my office, and I thank him for a nice day.

Is that you? Four versions of the multi-faceted Michael V.

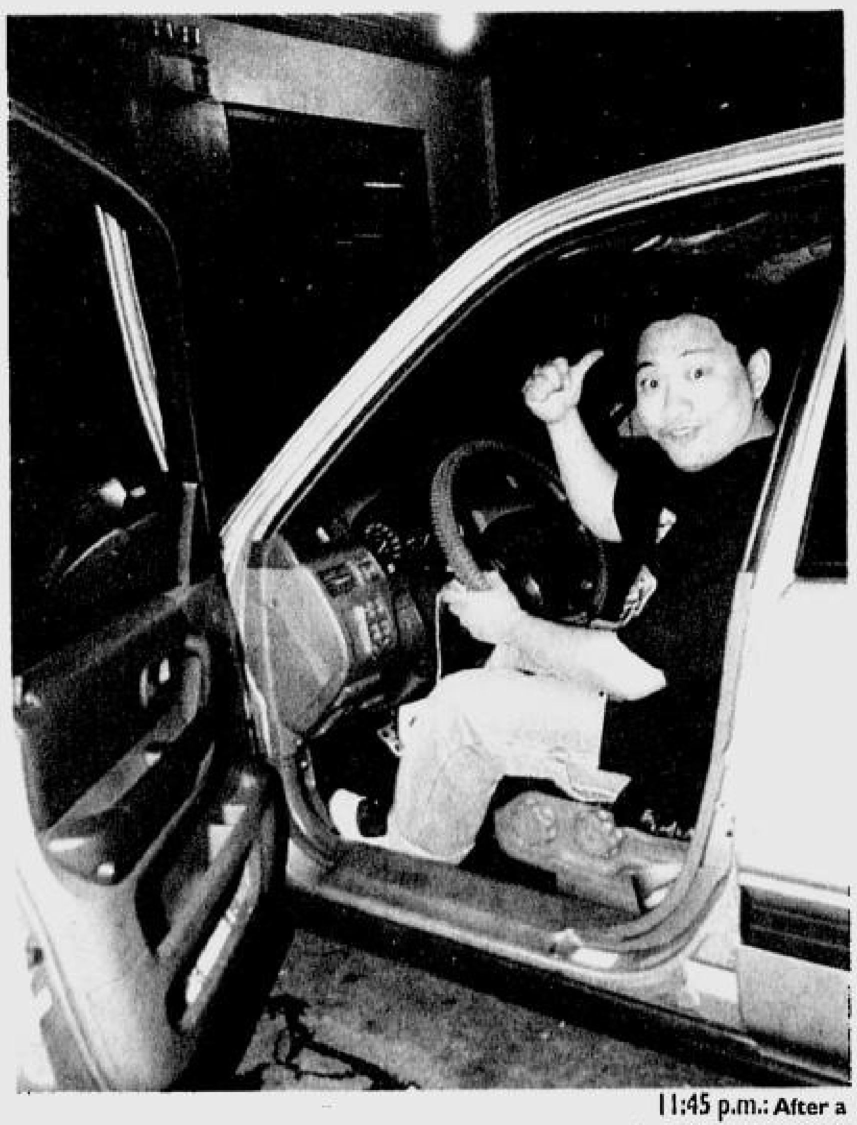


7:45 a.m.: The consummate Daddy plays with three-month-old son Migo as five-year-old daughter Yanni looks on



10 a.m.: In costume, and getting help from an idiot board for his lines on the set of "Bubble Gang"

2 p.m.: Watching the action between takes on the set with buddy and co-star Ogie Alcasid



11:45 p.m.: After a long day at work, he can't wait to get home to the family

Twists of Fate

By Chic Fortich

Her Christmas Remembrance

He may have died in a plane crash in 1998, but Boy Fernandez's birthday is still celebrated in a big way every December 22. Wife Olga Nery makes sure of that

WITHIN his circle of friends in Cagayan de Oro, Andres "Boy" Fernandez, Jr. was known as the local version of Elvis Presley. He not only sang like the rock n' roll icon, he also preened like the heartthrob and would glance at himself every so often in mirrors or car windows as he walked by. His hair, he insisted, must be impeccably combed and his shirt perfectly tucked in.

But it's not for his vanity that wife Olga Nery wants to remember by her husband, who died in a plane crash in 1998. The family had come home after several years in the United States to finally get their official working visas from the US Embassy here. Boy was on his way to a family reunion in Cagayan de Oro—their first in 12 years—when the plane he was riding veered from the coastline and flew over uncharted mountains. Buffeted by strong winds, the plane crashed into a moss-covered mountain, killing everyone on board. Boy had just marked his birthday more than a month before, on December 22.

Today, Boy still gets to celebrate his birthday, complete with various families and a rousing party. Olga has made sure of that. For the past four years, this former beauty queen has been throwing a Christmas party in their house for the marginalized families in their community.

The first year after her husband passed away, Olga spent the holidays shopping for gifts for the nearby orphanage to fill the emptiness she felt. Their children, all grown up, have their own lives, and only one son stays with her in CDO. Sometimes she would travel, visiting Southeast Asia, Australia and Europe. But it wasn't enough. Deep down, Olga was still hoping to find her husband of 33 years among the faces she met. In Canada, she had expected him to suddenly appear in the background of a photo, or even be glimpsed in a crowd.

Some 20 months after he died, Boy sent his wife a message through a friend. In essence, he told her: "Stop looking for me. I'm gone. I'm a free spirit now. You can get married again."

It was then that Olga realized that Boy was truly gone and she had to move on. "After that, I could joke about the whole thing. I knew then that I was okay and back to my old self."

When Boy's birthday and Christmas drew near in 1999, Olga resolved she would add something to the orphanage gift giving. With her house rising like a vision in a depressed area, she decided to deck the place with lights, each sparkle reflected back by the glass panels in the many windows of her living and dining areas. It was such a beautiful sight that her neighbors and their children would gather on the street, watching the lights as they talked late into the night. She decided to invite them in.

Olga as first runner-up in the 1965 Miss Philippines Aviation

That year, on the morning of December 22, Olga brought her gifts for the children of the orphanage as was her wont. Then, at six in the evening, she opened her gates, and the neighborhood's children began to pour in. To their delight, they got a warm welcome from Santa Claus (a costumed German, Digi Ashe, a business partner of one of Olga's daughters). The jolly man in red then started distributing gift bags filled with chocolates and candies, and individually wrapped presents. So ecstatic were the kids at the thought that they had met the real Santa that Olga decided to make the Christmas party an annual treat.

It was another tradition she knew she could share with Boy, whom she married in 1965. He was then working with the Philippine Packing Corporation as a computer programmer, while Olga worked at the GSIS-Commission on Audit and had babies. After their sixth child, the couple started looking around for ways to earn extra to support their growing family. Working abroad seemed to be an answer and in 1986, Boy left to work in Saudi. Five years later, in 1991, Olga flew to the United States, where Boy would follow shortly after. He worked with a newspaper servicing company in Trenton, New Jersey as a computer analyst, while Olga worked as a nursing assistant at the Medical Center of Princeton, also in New Jersey.

Life was definitely easier in the States, even if they missed their children, who stayed back home. For leisure, the couple attended prayer meetings where Boy, still adept at the guitar, often entertained friends with Christian songs sung in true Elvis Presley fashion.

Summing up the trade-offs of living away from home, Boy would often say, "When a door closes, another opens. You only have to pray so you will see it." They were comforting words that Olga adopted as her own philosophy.

In October 1997, the couple was advised to go back home so that the US Embassy could process their H-1 visas. Those were heady days, Olga recalls. Despite the harried Embassy interviews, there were family reunions to attend, an idyllic vacation in Olga's hometown in Mambajao, Camiguin, and Boy's first Christmas celebration back home in 12 years.

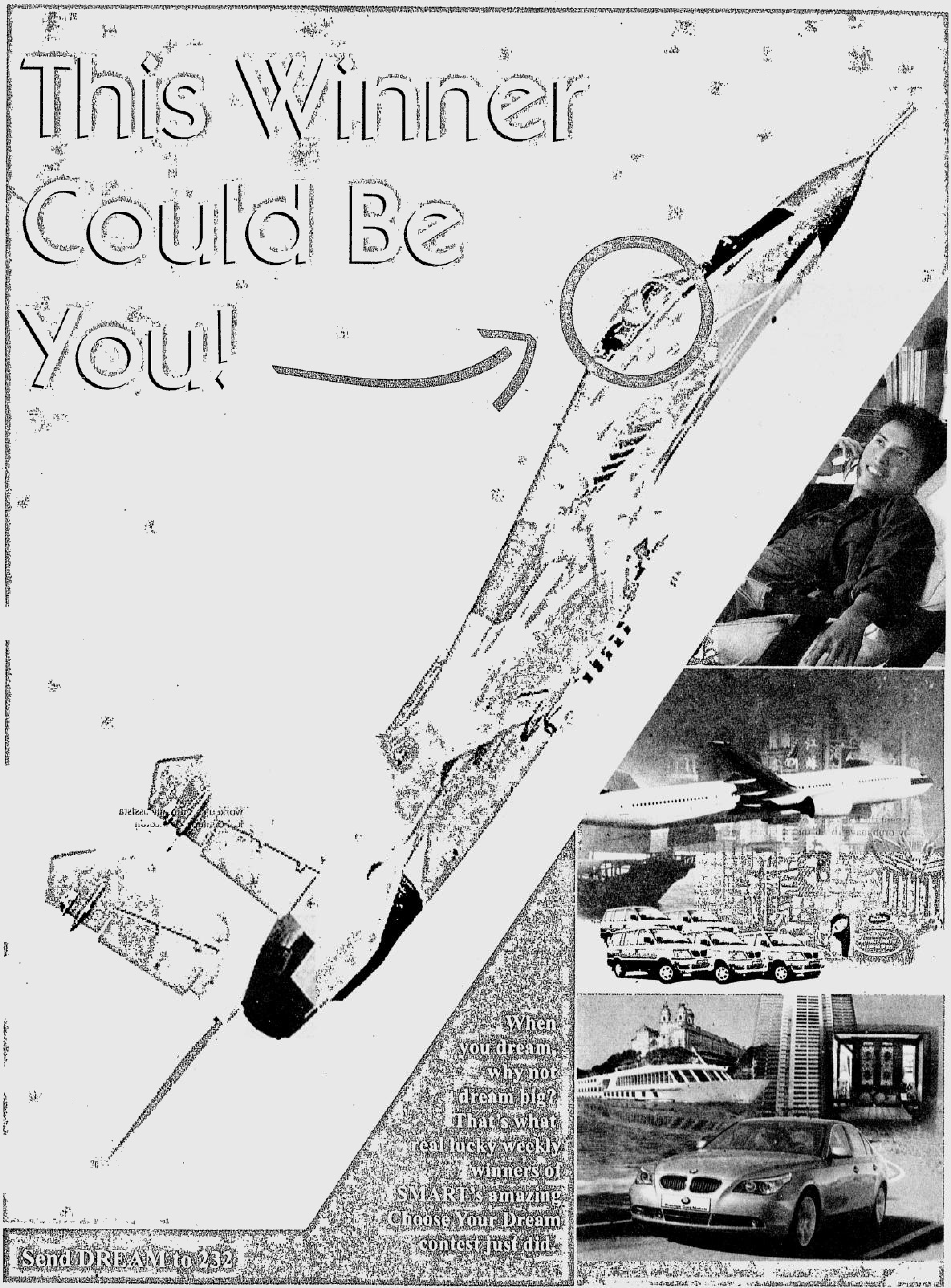
On January 28, 1998, Boy had his last embassy interview and was ready to go home. On the morning that he left, Olga noticed that her husband had spent too much time preening. Is the color combination okay? he asked. Should I wear rubber shoes, or moccasins without socks? He was very finicky about how he looked, recalls his wife. He finally settled on a P2,000 pair of Guess jeans, a red and white striped shirt and flesh-colored moccasins worn without socks.

Looking back, Olga realized that Boy was dressing up to meet his Maker. The plane that took off on February 2, 1998, never made it to Cagayan de Oro. The impact of the plane crash was such that all the forensic experts could present Olga was a gauze-wrapped stump, what was left of Boy's arm. The fingerprints, they said, matched the set of prints that Olga had provided.

But Boy left something else. Recalls Olga, 'The first thing rescuers found on the crash site was an unscorched piece of paper. It was the title to a residential lot in Carmen, Cagayan de Oro, in the name of Andres Fernandez, Jr. Olga embraced the title, and resolved to build a house there.

That house is where memories of Boy live on every December 22, during his birthday, when the gates are flung open and the neighborhood kids and their families stream in for a celebration. Muses Olga, "I guess this is what Boy means when he used to say that when a door closes, another gate opens."

Christmas then (with Boy) and now with the neighborhood kids and an improvised Santa (right)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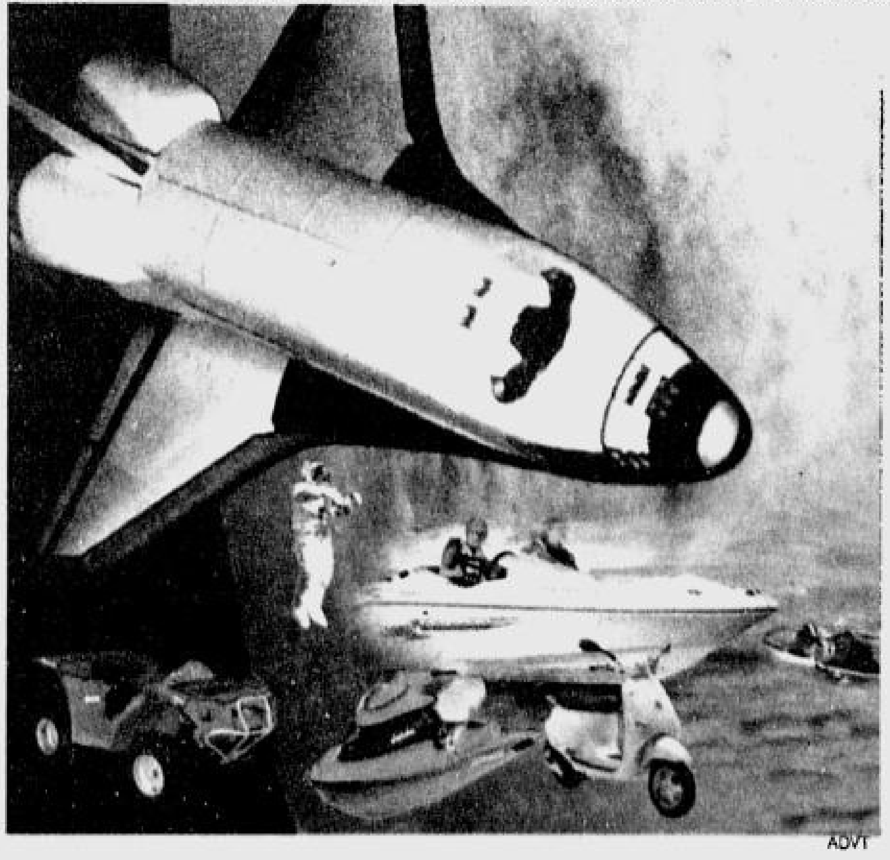
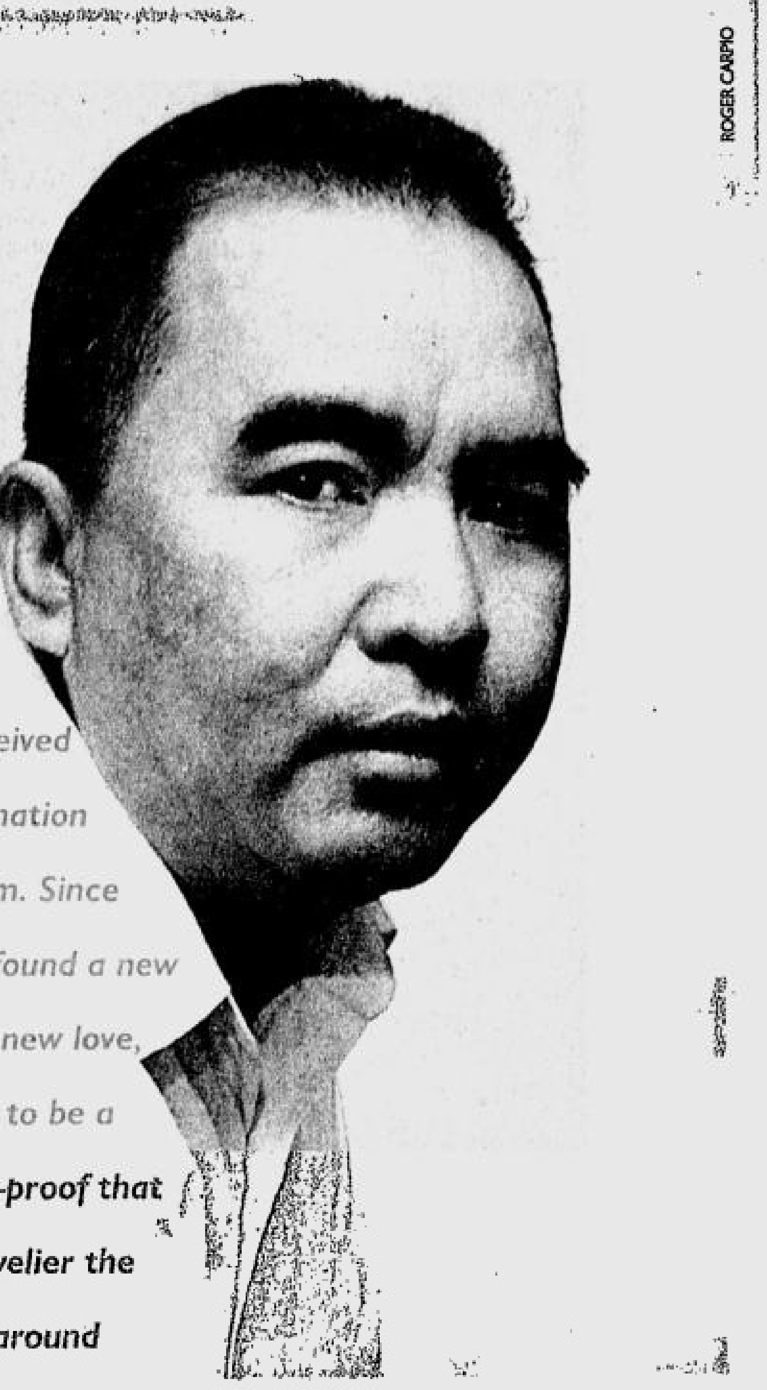


ADVT

Survivors' Tales

By Alya B. Honasan

A Sweeter Second Chance


ROGER CARPIO

It's been seven years since Renato Mercado received the organ donation that saved him. Since then, he has found a new career and a new love, and is hoping to be a father soon—proof that life can be lovelier the second time around

RENATO "Bobot" Mercado has one wish this Christmas. The 39-year-old real estate agent is hoping he and his wife Grace will be blessed with a child soon, after almost three years of marriage. "At least, if anything happens to me, Grace will have someone with her," he says in Filipino.

It's not a morbid thought; the soft-spoken Mercado received a kidney transplant before Christmas seven years ago, when he was on the brink of death from renal failure. Although he lives in constant vigil of his health, the gift of a new life is something no transplantee ever takes for granted.

It started with some persistent symptoms that Mercado, then a security guard and a bachelor, could not ignore. "I felt different," he says. "My blood pressure was fluctuating, I was always exhausted, my night vision was getting worse, and I could not urinate very well." It didn't help that Mercado smoked, drank beer and did not drink a lot of water. One day, he was rushed to the hospital when his vision totally disappeared and water retention made him swell. The diagnosis: end stage renal disease requiring immediate dialysis and a kidney transplant as soon as possible

"I was really afraid then," recalls the Angono native, who lived near his two sisters in Mandaluyong. The third and only boy among four siblings, Mercado approached his sisters, all of them with their own families, to ask if any of them would be willing to donate a kidney. One was disqualified because of congenital heart disease, another was not allowed by her husband. The third, then working in Japan, was a match, and she agreed to come home. Then, just as she was attending a seminar for potential organ donors, she heard a slew of horror stories about how losing an organ could make one weak and sickly—and changed her mind! "She got scared," Mercado says. "I couldn't blame her, though, as she lived far away from here. But I was really losing hope." He turned to other relatives, offering to "buy" a kidney with cash or gifts, but to no avail.

On dialysis twice a week, his skin discolored and his weight dropping below a hundred pounds (his fighting weight today is about 165 lbs), Mercado received yet another heartbreaking blow. Out of a job, he had been receiving support for his medical bills and his dialysis (P2,000 a session) from his sister and from his girlfriend of 14 years, who was also working in Japan. As hopes for a kidney donor dimmed, he learned that his girlfriend had fallen in love with a Japanese man and gotten married. *"Naloko ako* (I went crazy)," he says. "I kept calling her, and she said she couldn't help it. I think she really believed I was going to die soon."

What kept him going? "You realize you have nobody to turn to but God. That's what I held on to." Even before his crisis, Mercado was already a devout Catholic, even attending El Shaddai prayer meetings; the debacle only strengthened his faith. Living alone, he had to rely on friends and neighbors to accompany him to his dialysis sessions. "I think I must have asked everybody in my neighborhood to donate blood," he laughs.

In November of 1996, a year after he began dialysis, Mercado had signed up with Project HOPE (Human Organ Preservation Effort) and joined the long list of patients awaiting organ donations from strangers. "I was praying that God would give me a kidney as a Christmas gift," he says. The night of November 12, Mercado remembers feeling light-hearted and optimistic as he headed for the National Kidney Institute to submit a blood sample for organ matching. He remembers how busy the staffers at the counter were as he awaited processing. "As it turned out, they were looking for a recipient for a new kidney from a cadaver." A staffer saw him, asked for his blood type, cleared the match—and announced, "This man is a match, and he's here already."

Mercado could not believe it; he had only been signed up with HOPE for a month, and now he was going to get his kidney. "I didn't go home anymore, they had me confined. I remember praying that nothing would go wrong as they injected me with something to put me to sleep. When I woke up the next morning, I had a new kidney."

The operation went without a hitch. More interestingly, Mercado, who received subsidized treatment, got one kidney, while the other went to an affluent businessman with a private doctor. The man spent another P200,000 on medication to prevent rejection of the kidney, while Mercado was able to urinate within hours of his own transplant. "I was really, really lucky. Some people wait years and even die without getting a kidney. It's like God led me to the right place at the right time."

Mercado was out of the hospital in 10 days. After a year, he was well enough to find new work, and today makes a living as a real estate agent. Although he is on medication for life, the cost has diminished with time. From a monthly bill of some P30,000 for anti-rejection drugs right after his transplant, he now spends only about P4,000 a month.

Like other members of Kitap (the Kidney Transplant Association of the Philippines), Mercado celebrates the "birthday" of his new organ (November 13) as earnestly as he celebrates his own natal day (May 7). On that occasion every year, he has mass said for his donor, a young man of 24 who died in a motorcycle accident. "I only know his name, and I pray that he's in heaven now."

The group has monthly assemblies, and regularly discusses their needs and issues. Mercado has observed, for example, that his fellow transplantees lose heart when they are constantly reminded by doctors of the limited lifespan of their new organs. "We know they are being realistic, but it can really get your spirits down when they say, for example, *'O, siguro mga tatlong taon na lang yan'* (That will probably last just another three years). We don't like to think about how long we have left, even if that's always on our minds. If it's our time, then it's our time."

Another thing on the transplantees' wish list is that, like senior citizens, they be given cards to avail themselves of discounts on medicines at popular drugstores and outlets, not just at the National Kidney Institute.

Mercado now avoids fatty and salty food, walks for the exercise, and has given up smoking and drinking. "There's still a risk involved, so you have to be careful and avoid getting sick." There are also check-ups every three months—and constant gratitude for life-changing lessons. "I've learned that you have to trust in God, because nobody else can help you get your life back."

Which brings us to his new life with Grace and the future baby. In 2001, a neighbor of Mercado's played matchmaker and gave him the phone number of Grace, who worked in the accounting section of a manufacturing firm. "We talked on the phone, and we got along." They exchanged pictures, met, and began dating regularly, even as Mercado still hid the fact that he was a transplantee. When he finally told her, Grace responded, *'Ang daya mo* (You're not being fair). Now you tell me, when I'm already in love with you!" Grace's parents left the decision to their daughter, and she overcame her fears of marrying a man whose future can never really be completely certain. They were married in April 2001, after five months of courtship and while waiting for the ideal timing for Grace to conceive a new family member, the couple spends weekends watching movies and going out. "It's like we're still just sweethearts," Mercado laughs. "But we want a child—it doesn't matter if it's a boy or a girl, as long as the baby is healthy."

This is the kind of second life that organ donation makes possible, Mercado stresses. "If you want to donate an organ, please don't be afraid," he says. "And if you lose a loved one, instead of burying all those precious organs with him, donate them. They can still save a life." And Renato Mercado is literal, living proof of that.

Project Hope (Human Organ Preservation Effort) can be reached through tel. nos. 924-0680, 924-3601 local 2154, 0916-2589685, 0916-2582770 and 0916-2582786.

The Word

By Fr. Ruben J. Villote

It Doesn't Have to Be Christmas

You can swing a surprise for someone important to you and make him or her feel loved and affirmed any day of the year

IT DOES not have to be Christmas or Valentine or Easter for us to surprise one another with gifts of caring and affirmation. And it does not have to be fruitcake for Christmas, roses for Valentine's Day, and colored candy-eggs for Easter. You do not even have to buy "things" from the merchants who are experts at converting our meaningful relationships into commercial events.

You can swing a surprise for someone important to you and make him or her feel loved and affirmed any day of the year. You may spend a million or nothing, but what you give is a free and spontaneous gift not imposed on you by customs and traditions, in connivance with the money-makers.

The Child wrapped in swaddling clothes was a gift to us by the Father. We are told that he was not even born in December, but in late September or early October. But it does not matter for those who give themselves as gifts continuously any day, or every day of the year.

For me, I don't care if it's Christmas, Valentine, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day or Thanksgiving Day. For as long as I can remain as gift to be shared and as bread to be consumed for the nourishment, healing and deliverance of many, I can spend my whole life celebrating the graciousness of the Father, together with those who wish to make their own lives a continuous festival of gift-giving in the spirit of the First Christmas.

What To Do When You Receive a Gift

1. Accept the gift; allow the giver the joy of giving.
2. Do not "repay" by giving an equivalent gift (quid pro quo). Do not feel obligated and dependent on the giver.
3. Humbly express your gratitude—by saying thank you directly and warmly, or by writing a note of thanks—with or without a token gift (handmade, homecooked, not bought).
4. Enjoy the gift by using, wearing or tasting it, if possible in the presence of the giver.
5. Share the gift, at least, by showing it to others and affirming both the gift and the giver.
6. Bring both the givers and their gifts to your prayer, asking God the Giver of all gifts to fill their cup "in good measure, pressed down, shaken together to overflowing" (Lk 6:38)
7. For every gift you receive, give to another (especially the "giftless ones") the gift of your presence —your time, talent and/or treasure as an act of gratitude for the gift of being remembered and loved.

Is Christmas for Children Only?

We have always believed that Christmas is for children. Perhaps it is because children can still wonder. This sense of wonder is something which adults have lost. We like to pretend that we know everything. We like to be known as "scientific" and "progressive." We brag about the number of books we have read, the number of seminars and workshops we have attended, and the number of researches and experiments we have made on everything from science and séances to sex and somnambulism.

We cannot surprise the adult anymore. He has lost his sense of symbol and mystery and he has degenerated into a machine.

That's why the world is in trouble, because the adult has lost his childhood. He has driven his natural childlike simplicity into his subconscious, and camouflaged it with a whole system of "adult postures" to keep himself from looking and feeling like a child.

But all this is just part of a defense mechanism which has made the adult afraid of his own childhood. And he keeps suppressing these fears—fear of the child in him. He fears everything related to his childhood: his father, his mother, his grade school teacher, his toys, his hometown, his religion, etc.

The adult keeps running away from the shadow of his own past. He keeps on pretending that he is now "grown-up" and "mature," no longer a child. He is scared of being a child. And so he keeps on pretending. That's why he has become a phony adult.

Christmas is a liberating event. It liberates us from our own phoniness by releasing the child in each of us by bringing back a sense of wonder which can make life meaningful.

Christmas liberates us from our childhood fears and makes us humble by accepting our limitations. Where our humility begins, there also begins to grow faith, hope and trusting love for the mysteries of life before which we can only stand in wonder and awe like little children.

Calendar

Today, 21 December 2003 (Fourth Sunday of Advent), our CMY Mass is Simbang Takipsilim at 5:00 p.m. There will be a little concert of carols-in-the-yard after the Mass during the repast. Linger awhile, relax and beat the "Christmas Rush." Be still and know that He whom we await is here—at home with us.

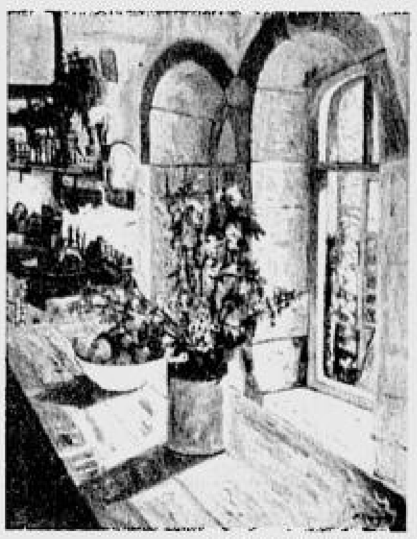
CMY greets you a Merry Christmas.

This Week

Art

Obra Maestra, an exhibit of the remaining treasured wood carvings of Juan C. Flores together with the works of his Kapampangan artist protegés, until Dec. 30 at the Ugnayan Hall of the Development Bank of the Philippines, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue corner Makati Avenue, Makati City.

Kami na... Naman, a group exhibit featuring a collage of abstract and modern realism paintings and mixed media by fine arts students from different universities, at the Kanlungan ng Sining in Luneta Park until Dec. 31.



"Morning Light" by Francesca Enriquez at Finale Megamall

Finale Art gallery is presenting National Artist **Ang Kiukok** and US-based artist **Francesca Enriquez** in separate shows. Ang Kiukok is exhibiting his latest works at Finale Makati (4/F, La O Arcade, corner of Makati Avenue and Pasay Road) while Enriquez is unveiling current paintings at Finale Megamall (Artwalk, 4/L, SM Megamall A). Both shows run until Jan. 4.

Haplos, a group exhibit featuring paintings by Kim Adam, Mardy Aguilar, Aurora Caparas, Eileen Bondoc-Escueta, Albert Grupe, Linda Caedo-Lupton, Tony Martino, Ed Ramos, Micaela Lourdes Reyes, Lily Avila-Wuzela with Nunelucio Alvarado and Egai Fernandez at the Syano Artlink (19 Shanghai St., Better Living Subd., Parañaque City) until Jan. 7.

In celebration of the Asean Japan-Exchange Year 2003, the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the Japan Foundation is organizing the exhibit, **Beyond the Surface—Japanese Style of Making Things**, featuring works of photography, interior design, textiles and fiber sculpture until Jan. 8 at the CCP's Bulwagang Juan Luna.

Tables, furniture sculptures by Reg Yuson until Jan. 10 at the mag:net Gallery, The Loop, ELJ Center, 950| Eugenio Lopez St., ABS-CBN Compound, QC.

VOX Manila at the Hyatt Regency Manila

Music

Guests of Hyatt Regency Manila along Roxas Boulevard have one more reason to hang out at the hotel lobby on Dec. 21 and 24 at 7 p.m. During these dates, **VOX Manila**, one of the country's active vocal ensembles, is offering a delightful choral treat of timeless Christmas carols in a cappella and acoustic arrangements. As among the elite circle of talents invited to grace "9 days of Christmas," the theme of Hyatt's Christmas lobby entertainment this year, VOX Manila hopes to rekindle the Christmas spirit with a mix of classic and contemporary favorites performed in upbeat fashion to help keep the Yuletide celebration in tune with the times.

The Peninsula Manila continues its much-beloved Christmas tradition of **Caroling at The Lobby with Coro Animo** serenading guests with a program of seasonal carols on Dec. 22 and 23 from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. Coro Animo is composed of former members of the De La Salle University Chorale. For inquiries, call 887-2888.

Mossimo presents the Manila debut of **Keith Martin**, the singer behind the hit "Because of You," on Jan. 8, 9 and 10 at the Meralco Theater. Joining Keith in the three-night concert are Paolo Santos, Jimmy Bondoc, the Passage Band and Silk. On Jan. 8, special performances will be rendered by the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra, Medwin Marfil, Pido With Take One, Rebekah, Kitchie Nadal, AkaFellas and Sarah Geronimo. Tickets are available at all National Bookstore branches, Tower Records, Music Museum, CCP box office, Call Ticketworld at 891-5610 for details.

Cinema

Pelikula@titusbrandsma presents coming-of-age flicks featuring "My Father's Glory" (France), "Ghost World" (USA) and "Little Cheung" (Hong Kong) on Jan. 10 at 1 p.m. at Titus Brandsma Center (24 Acacia St., Cubao, Quezon City). For details, call 721-8677 / 726-7763 (Jofti) or 839-7351 (Francis).

Food

An interesting selection of Christmas cakes, puddings, breads, chocolates, cookies and other bakery confections are now available at **InterContinental Manila's Jeepney Deli Shop**. Pretty to look at are gingerbread houses with their candy-studded rooftops and Santa Claus dolls of sugar. Other must-try items are the steamed Christmas pudding, Dressner Stollen, Pannatone and Kings Cake (Galletes de Rois). The deli shop is open Monday to Sunday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. For inquiries, call 815-9711 ext. 261 to 263.

Yuletide Cheers, Manila Pavilion's drink of the month, is a merry medley of mango and orange juices laced with Havana Rum. Tiny bits of apple give Yuletide Cheers a nippy, tutti-fruity finish. The drink is available at all hotel outlets and comes with a stuffed toy. Also sample the Brandied Gingerbread Cake, the hotel's cake of the month, available at the Pattiserie. For inquiries, call 526-1212 ext. 2326.

The **Richmonde Hotel** cooks up **generous feasts** this Christmastime. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, the Grill's buffet spread overflows with delectable holiday choices and a variety of luscious desserts from savory crepes to creamy cheesecakes, velvety soft shortcakes to chewy Christmas cookies. On New Year's Eve, there will be a grand buffet of international dishes with enticing selections such as Roast Chicken with Blueberry Sauce, Pork Tenderloin on Spiced Currant Sauce, Prawns Thermidor, and Herbed Lamb Chops on Ratatouille and Shitake Mushrooms. For reservations, call 638-7777 ext. 3409.

Dusit Hotel Nikko's Christmas offerings: Authentic Thai meals at Benjarong Thai Restaurant; Japanese Hot Pot and Noodles on Parade at Benkay Restaurant; Vietnamese Yuletide Feast at Thien Duong Vietnamese Restaurant; Christmas and New Year Dinner Buffet Specials featuring all-time Filipino and international holiday fare favorites at the Café Restaurant; traditional delicacies puto bumbong and bibingka at the Lobby Lounge, and a variety of mouth-watering goodies from the Deli Shop. For inquiries, call 867-3333.

The **Peninsula Manila** salutes 2004 with a **gala ball** on Dec. 31. The revelry begins at 9 p.m. with a dinner buffet and entertainment provided by the Nonoy Lopez Band, Hyperbeat, XOP and Outbreak. For details, call 887-2888.

The **Westin Philippine Plaza** celebrates the holiday season with a festive spread of Yuletide treats to make get-togethers truly memorable. Have a joyful feast at Café Plaza's Grand **Christmas Lunch and Dinner Buffets** on Dec. 24 and 25 and savor the widest array of international choices. Guests can opt for a quiet dinner at Alfiere Italian Bistro or enjoy a buffet of grilled specialties and live bands at the Poolside Barbecue. For reservations, call 551-5555.

Atbp

Wood carvings by Juan C. Flores in "Obra Maestra" at the DBP

Parents, workers, youths, civic-oriented groups and individuals wanting to hear series of lectures on how the Bible can help their personal and family life are invited to attend the **2003 district convention of Jehovah's Witnesses.** The convention theme "Give God Glory" emphasizes why and how glorifying God should be a major force for good in one's life. Jehovah's Witnesses will hold 65 conventions in 52 cities throughout the country every Friday, Saturday and Sunday of December-January 2004. Delegates from Metro Manila and nearby provinces will gather at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses along Quirino Highway in Novaliches, Quezon City. Admission is free. For inquiries, please call (02) 411-6090.

Issue 13 of the best-selling **Pinoy animé comic book Culture Crash** is now on sale featuring the further adventures of Cat's trail, Pasig, Kubori Kikiam and One Day Isang Diwa. Every issue also includes two pull-out posters plus articles about Cosplay and Ragnarok online. Copies are now available at your favorite comic book shops and bookstores.

"Culture Crash" now available at bookstores

X-manila

The **Purple Panthers of the Ateneo de San Pablo** will celebrate their **52nd anniversary** on Dec. 28 at Roños Placa, Lakeside Park, San Pablo City. Class '57 headed by Atty. Vic Joyas is this year's host. For details, call Hermie Camaya (049) 561-1179; Gary Hernandez (049) 561-1073 and Buddy Peñalosa (049) 562-3476.

Engineer Armando "Andy" M. Ramos has an ongoing solo exhibit, ***Obra Maestra***, at the Fontana Baracas, Fontana Leisure Parks, Clark Field, Pampanga until Dec. 31.

For this week's bands and schedules call:

- Hard Rock Café (893-4662-65)
- Virgin Café : QC (926-7982)
- '70s Bistro: 46 Anonas St., QC (922-0492)
- Hobbit House: 1801 Mabini St., Malate, Manila (521-7604)
- Strumm's: El Pueblo, Ortigas (637-3009)

The Sunday Inquirer Magazine welcomes listings of events in and outside Metro Manila. Please send announcements at least two weeks in advance, and include contact numbers for inquiries on schedules

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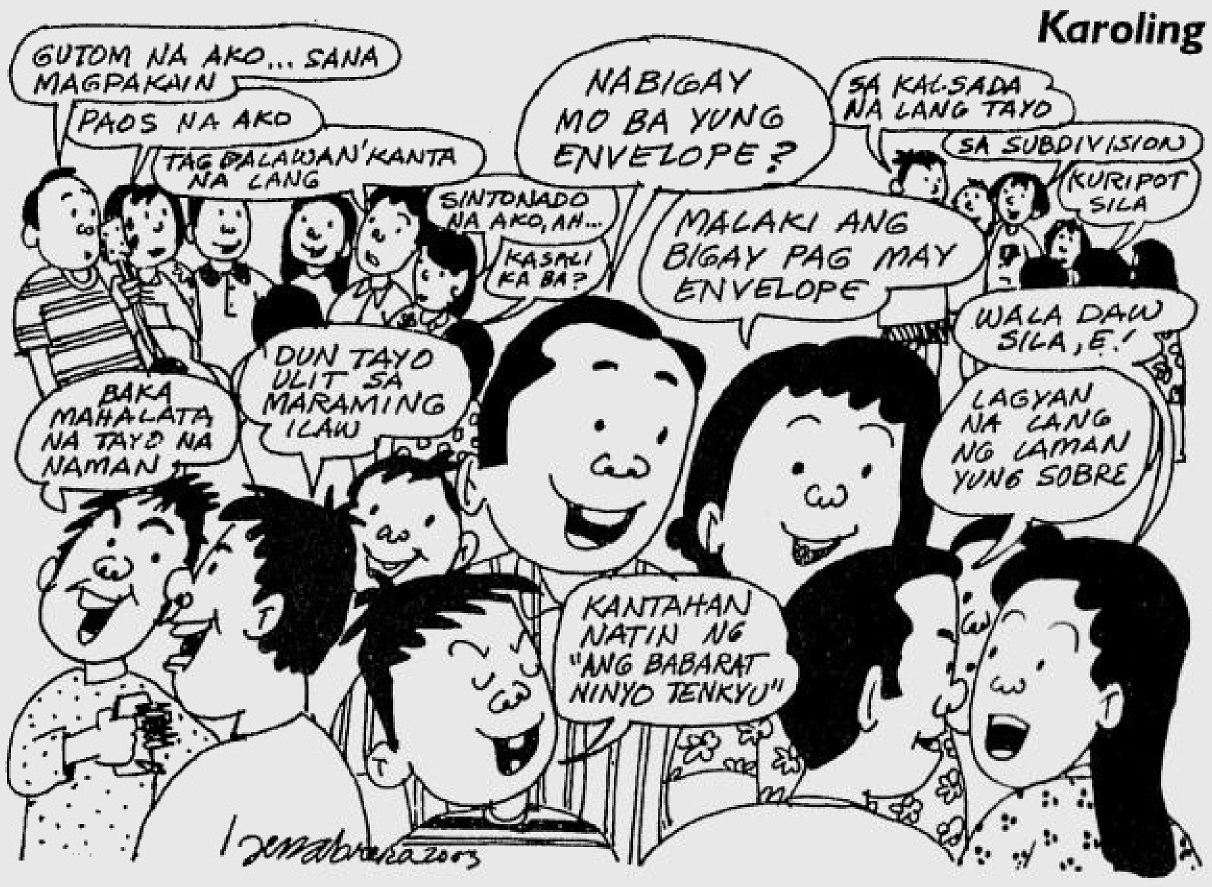
Pinoy Nga

By Jess Abrera

Karoling

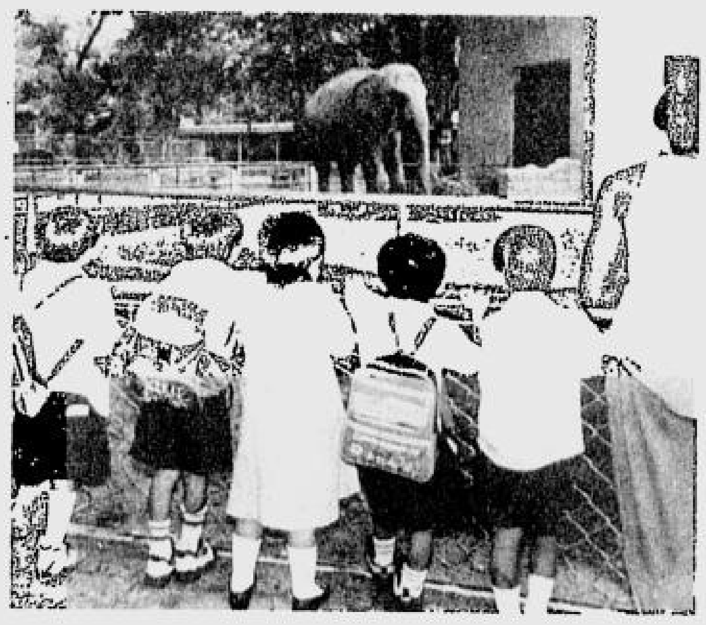

GUTOM NA AKO... SANA MAGPAKAIN
PAOS NA AKO
TAG BALAWAN'KANTA NA LANG
SINTONADO NA AKO, AH...
KASALI KA BA?
NABIGAY MO BA YUNG ENVELOPE?
SA KALSADA NA LANG TAYO
SA SUBDIVISION
KURIPOT SILA
MALAKI ANG BIGAY PAG MAY ENVELOPE
WALA DAW SILA, E!
BAKA MAHALATA NA TAYO NA NAMAN
DUN TAYO ULIT SA MARAMING ILAW
LAGYAN NA LANG NG LAMAN YUNG SOBRE
KANTAHAN NATIN NG "ANG BABARAT NINYO TENKYU"

Giving Guide

Move and Share

Offer your sweat and skills as a volunteer

THERE'S still time to share before the year ends, and here are some options you may consider when the Christmas presents have been unwrapped and the firecracker smoke has cleared. After all, giving need not be a material business. The greatest gift you can still share is your time, and these truly worthy causes could sure use some helping hands and minds.



My Zu Clean-Up Brigade

Help sweep litter and make the place a more pleasant place to visit. Learn about biodiversity and conservation during the orientation; and bring bananas to feed the elephant! Saturdays, 2-4 p.m., Manila Zoological and Botanical Garden (a.k.a. Manila Zoo) Administration Building, Adriatico St., Malate. Call the Hands-On Manila Foundation at tel. nos. 843-7044 or 843-5231. Bring an extra shirt, drinking water and large garbage bags.

Winner Foundation-Arroceros Forest Park Clean-Up Team

Help beautify this downtown Forest Park by sweeping the floor, collecting garbage or segregating trash, or help trim the dried leaves and vines. Saturdays, 8-11 a.m., Arroceros Forest Park, Manila (near LRT Central Station). Call the Hands-On Manila Foundation at tel. nos. 843-7044 or 843-5231. Wear a hat, closed shoes or boots, and bring an extra shirt, face towel, soap, insect repellant, bottled water, packed lunch, *walis tingting*, garbage bags, gloves, trowel or rake, a *banig*, and pruning scissors or jungle knife. You can also bring any greens you may want to plant.

AMCHAM

Writers are welcome to assist the American Chamber of Commerce in its fundraising and resource mobilization programs. Help put together communications and information kits, or sign on as a volunteer media coordinator for special events, help in office work, or help train staffers in writing. Time is flexible, location is at M/F Abemir Plaza, 1741 Dian St., Palanan, Makati. Contact Hilda T. Cleofe, Executive Director, tel. nos. 834-0184 or 551-8060, or Cheryll Malayang, tel. nos. 521-6260 or 521-6276.

Tuloy sa Don Bosco Foundation

Volunteers help tutor streetchildren on weeknights, and facilitate activities relating to theater, music and visual arts on weekends. Activities are at the Tuloy sa Don Bosco Center in Alabang, but shuttle service will be provided for volunteers from Makati on weekdays. Tutoring is from 8 to 9 p.m. Mondays to Fridays, and other activities are 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. Contact Divina Solano, tel. no. 807-7179.

Listing courtesy of Hands-On Manila Foundation Inc.

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Capture the FUN to get a chance to WIN!

Join the SMART

GOT ü!

MMS PHOTO CONTEST

NOKIA
Falling In Love!

30 Finalists

bring home a

Nokia 3650

each

Special Prizes

- 1 Nokia 7250i to be raffled off weekly
- ₱10,000 to the *Most Downloaded Picture Per Theme*

Grand Prize

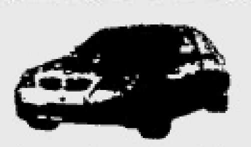
₱50,000

2nd Prize:

₱20,000

3rd Prize:

₱10,000



Get a chance to win a BMW 520i! Register for free. Text DREAM to 232!

NOKIA
CONNECTING PEOPLE

Send us via MMS those special moments captured using your celfone's digital camera and you could win cash or MMS-capable Nokia celfones.

To join, simply Click-Create-and-Send your best original MMS photo message based on the following themes:

December 14, 2003 to January 4, 2004 - Bloopers
December 29, 2003 to January 25, 2004 - Barkada Moments
January 26, 2004 to February 22, 2004 - Family Fun

You can send in your entries anytime on the given timeframe.
Judging will start the next day after the last day of submission of entries.

You can also share the fun with your friends because all entries can be downloaded and forwarded!

To view all entries, just visit the SMART WAP site.

**Only pictures taken with a camera phone (built-in or attached) are valid as entries for this contest.*

To get started:
key in GOTU and send to 373

To register:
key in REG <NAME/ADDRESS> and send to 373

Here's how to create your MMS entry:

Click
Use your celfone's digital camera to take pictures.

Create
Compose an MMS message by adding text to the picture you took.

Send
Send composed multimedia photo message to 373.

In case your MMS hasn't been activated yet, send MMS to 211.

The SMART Got u! MMS Photo Contest is open to:

SMART GOLD Simply The Gold Life. · Buddy Pre-paid · addict · TALK 'N TEXT

SMART
Simply Amazing!

Promo Period: December 14, 2003 to March 21, 2004. See posters and flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3819, Series of 2003.